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THURSDAY, JANUARY 1ST, 2015

Happy new year to all our readers and advertisers!

Barry Lifeguards welcomed people to their Boxing Day swim. The weather was rainy so those taking part were soaking before they reached the sea! **(PICTURE BY ANDY WICKS).**

Joy for local family as Ron gets a vital anti-cancer drug

Report by **TIM CHAPMAN**

THE Squires family from Dinas Powys were overjoyed this Christmas, after their father, Ron, was given a vital anti-cancer drug.

The GEM highlighted Ron's plight in our issue on Thursday, December 18.

The family had appealed to Cardiff and Vale University Health board for him to be given 'Axitinib', a drug that interferes in the growth of cancer cells.

On Friday, December 19, The GEM spoke to the family, who said the board had given the drug the green light and a supply was already in the house.

Ron's wife, Marilyn, said she was thrilled...

"It is fantastic news. We can't believe our luck. We are so, so pleased."

Daughter Lynne added: "We got a call from my dad's oncologist to say Cardiff and Vale had approved Axitinib. There had been an urgent review.

"We want to thank everybody who helped in our campaign and the press. Dad is over the moon. We are so grateful for the treatment."

The family have stressed that throughout the ordeal, the care given by NHS staff has been excellent.

Vale MP Alun Cairns said he was delighted for Ron and the Squires family.

"To have received such good news going into 2015 is very pleasing.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

BODY FOUND ON BEACH

POLICE officers were called to Penarth beach on Sunday, December 28, following the discovery of a body.

The police say they were called at 9.17am.

A spokeswoman said: "The body of a man was recovered. His next of kin have been informed and formal identification of his body arranged.

"Investigation into the circumstances of his death are continuing on behalf of HM Coroner."

Barry Dock Lifeboat rescue crewman who suffered heart attack

A man who had a heart attack on board a dredger in the Bristol Channel, was rescued by Barry Dock RNLI lifeboat on Sunday (December 28).

The crew was called out at 7.44am and headed for the 'Arco Dart' which had called emergency services for help.

The lifeboat crew treated the man and brought him to shore.

A spokeswoman said: "Lifeboat crew members undergo many hours training each year to make sure that they can give such care to the people they rescue at sea.

"They brought the man to shore where they were met by the volunteer lifeboat doctor, who continued caring for the patient with the help of the crew.

"At just after 9am, the man was taken to hospital by ambulance.

"Everyone at Barry Dock RNLI lifeboat station sends their best wishes for a speedy recovery to the crew member of the Arco Dart."

The incident illustrates the great work undertaken by people in a voluntary capacity during the Christmas break.

The spokeswoman added: "The crew has been on standby throughout the festive season and will continue to do so throughout 2015, thanks to the friends and supporters of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, the charity that saves lives at sea.

"If you can help with its lifesaving work, please contact the station on 01446 735 678."

GEM readers respond to animal appeal

THE GEM warmly thanks our readers for their response to the 'Animal Welfare Donation' campaign this Christmas.

Joanne Eveleigh, who helped to organise the campaign, said: "We have had a great response to our appeal and would like everyone to know that the items collected are being distributed."

(For more on this story, turn to page 21).

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Off with the old, on with the new...*for a fresh start!*

AS we bid farewell to a turbulent 2014 and greet the first day of a new year that could prove even more of a political and social watershed, the revels are tinged with more nervous anticipation than usual.

Many will be glad to see the back of a fractious 12 months that seemed to have more than its share of negative media headlines detailing natural disasters, financial deficits, funding crises, foodbanks, acrimonious disputes at home, and rising global terrorism.

However, The GEM remains ever hopeful that this new year will bring more positive outcomes to remember on all fronts.

We will, as always, continue to do our part by presenting a more balanced picture in our columns of the true human spirit – reflected in many selfless actions and heartwarming stories of ordinary men and women in our own local community.

This is a world away from the kind of bitter conflicts and controversies that marked so much of last year. It is fervently to be hoped that in this momentous general election year, politicians of all parties will have learnt a lesson from the divisive, highly-personalised attacks engendered by the Scottish referendum that still threaten to disunite the United Kingdom.

To paraphrase a certain great parliamentarian: "*jaw-jaw is better than war-war.*"

That message was underlined earlier this week by the director general of the influential British Chambers of Commerce, John Langworth, who called on all our politicians to rise above point-scoring in the forthcoming election campaign.

He warned that – "*tawdry political tactics would deflect from the important issues facing the UK economy.*"

Let us pray that January 1, 2015 heralds a fresh start for frank but civilised, democratic debate, focusing on real grass-roots issues that affect us all on a daily basis, rather than dreary, bipartisan confrontation for party advantage.

It may be forlorn, but that at least is our fervent wish at the dawn of this new year.

After all, the public deserve nothing less.

THE EDITOR

Great year for the Friends and Neighbours

I WOULD like to take the opportunity to thank Marlene, Chris, Gail, Jen, Andrea, Sue, Joyce and Eve for all their support in ensuring Friends and Neighbours had such a wonderful 2014 programme.

Thanks also to Jane Hutt AM and Alun Cairns MP for their support throughout the year, and to both Vale Council and Barry Town Council for their support.

Age Connect Cardiff and Vale Senior Health Shop have let us have use of the Senior Health Shop for the monthly meetings and many of the customers that use the shop have joined the group as a result

The group had a wonderful year, including trips, lunches visits to theatre including *Lion King* at Wales Millennium Centre and, of course, their Christmas party to finish the year off.

This was thanks to sponsorship from Barry Round Table, Barry Rotary Club and Renishaw.

The programme for 2015 has lots going on and with membership increasing, the group has moved to Beryl Road Pioneer Hall.

Gaye Fifield,
Coordinator, Friends and Neighbours.

'Fewer councillors will save money'

A RECENT correspondent (GEM letters, December 18) commented on the saving of some £24,000 on the provision of recycling and waste information online, or on application by telephone.

He/she then asked if anyone else had a feasible suggestion for any further savings?

May I suggest a review of councillor numbers?

At a time when services are cut or reduced, surely it is not unreasonable to consider amalgamating wards or parts of wards and thus reducing the number of councillors?

A reduction of five to 10 per cent of the latter would not damage local democracy – and the money saved could help to support essential services.

CP, Barry

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LETTERS AND E-MAILS MUST INCLUDE FULL ADDRESS AND A CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER

IMPORTANT: We reserve the right to edit all letters. We do NOT accept anonymous mail. An email address alone is not sufficient!
We will (*in certain circumstances*)protect a writer's identity, if requested.

'Council merger debate was a Dickensian affair'

THE recent debate at the Vale of Glamorgan Council meeting about the proposed voluntary merger with Bridgend, turned out to be a bit of a Dickensian affair.

The ghost of Christmas past was clearly visible from councillors of different political persuasions. The image of the 'old candle-carrying' South Glamorgan was raised repeatedly to describe how Cardiff would get the lion's share of resources (no mention that Cardiff had three times the number of taxpayers).

There were frequent references to the council leader being bullied by the Minister to move away from the previous, almost unanimous, council decision – that the council were doing a great job and should be left alone.

Gone are those days of harmony when just one councillor disagreed with the rest.

However, the ghost of Christmas present emerged when most councillors failed to address criticisms of local government, the very high number of councillors in Wales, and a probable increase in council tax.

There were some comments relating to the council crossing the Welsh Government red-lines of Health Board boundaries, European aid money and preferred merging partners; but very little about how a Bridgend outcome would produce many more Vale councillors than a Cardiff merger.

The council's submission to WG was described as weak, and that it failed to make the case for a Bridgend merger, particularly due to the lack of convincing evidence of public engagement.

The issue was summarised by the leader as a simple case of ABC: anyone but Cardiff, because that would be a takeover, and we wouldn't want that would we?

Secretly, I suspect some felt that may be the best way forward.

And then there was the ghost of Christmas yet to come. The possibility of just six councils in Wales; regional local government structures; massive reductions in public expenditure and the fate of political careers in the hands of a very unpopular Minister. It doesn't look like a happy ending for Tiny Tim.

There was the occasional lack of Christmas spirit during the debate, but the vote was a predictable win for the Labour-led administration, with a decent number of votes against, and an unsurprising number of abstentions. How times change!

"Bah," said Scrooge, "Humbug".

Dennis Harkus
FocusBARRY member

What a panto to remember!

WOW! What an absolutely spectacular performance of *Cinderella* at the Memorial Hall, Barry, on December 21, performed by the brilliant Billboard Ensemble.

Every year seems to get better and better. The performance was in typical panto style, with the main male characters played by women and the very funny Ugly Sisters and Baroness Hardup played by men.

The costumes were absolutely stunning, as was the singing and dancing.

What a lovely way to get into the Christmas spirit. Thank you for an amazing show.

Susan Wilson, Barry

Barry Island ***is*** *the place to be in 2015!*

I AM writing to say how much I agree with people who say that Barry Island is the place to visit in 2015.

With a series of redevelopments taking place, Barry Island really is an up and coming resort and looking pretty good.

As well as the redevelopments, thanks to public pressure a new relief road will be built between Barry Waterfront and Barry Island, which will make it easier for people to visit the resort.

We have also seen developments on the Eastern Shelter with new lighting, facilities and beach huts and although I did not support the bringing of these huts, I suppose it is something else for visitors to use. We need to bring back visitors to our jewel in the crown, and what has happened so far will certainly help.

On top of this, we now have a promise to rejuvenate the pleasure park by fairground veteran Henry Danter, which is badly needed after years of decline; a new ASDA store creating 300 jobs; and the redevelopment of the former pump house into quality shops and restaurants.

So far, so good, but we still desperately need a new cinema, a cabaret club and a water park. But at least Barry Island is finally moving in the right direction.

Coun Richard Bertin, Barry
(*Independent, Vale of Glamorgan Council*)

'Travellers are *not* Romany'

IN this season of 'goodwill to all men... and women' what to do about the site in Hayes Road, Sully, currently occupied by 'Travellers'?

I may be mistaken, but most of the occupiers are not Romany or Sinfi people.

They may describe themselves as 'New Age' or anything else – that is for them – but apart from one family known to me, who I believe have moved away, the inhabitants are *not* Romany.

The site is, of course, a former civic public tip; it is not ideal either for the occupiers or Sully residents.

However, the council has a legal obligation to provide at least one site in the Vale and to remove the present inhabitants and purchase and build facilities on another site would cost a considerable amount in these austere times.

Furthermore, there are few Labour votes in Sully. Consequently, in spite of the anger of residents, by maintaining the status quo, the party will not lose any local authority seats.

All-in-all, the site looks set to stay ad infinitum.

Christopher Short, Barry
(Former vice-president: National Gypsy Education Council)

Charity walk set fair

MY thanks to all of you who supported the recent fundraising for Velindre Hospital.

The walk from Barry Dock Offices to Rhoose Point with Weatherman Derek Brockway was very well supported and because of your generosity, my part of the project was an outstanding success. Thank you all.

Brian Acott, St Athan

HIGH TIDE TIMES
(UNTIL JANUARY 8)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary. For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time AM	Ht M	Time PM	Ht M
01 Thur	02.56	8.4	15.25	8.6
02 Fri	03.57	8.6	16.24	8.8
03 Sat	04.49	8.9	17.13	8.9
04 Sun	05.35	9.1	17.58	9.1
05 Mon	06.19	9.3	18.38	9.2
06 Tues	06.57	9.4	19.17	9.1
07 Wed	07.33	9.1	19.49	8.9
08 Thur	08.07	9.1	20.22	8.8

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.

We abide by the code of practice upheld by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). This contains provisions for issues such as accuracy.

If you have a complaint, write to us at the address below, left, or call editorial manager Don John on 01446 774484. All complaints will be fully investigated. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may wish to contact IPSO c/o Halton House, 20-23 High Holborn, London EC1N 2JD. Website: www.ipso.co.uk. Tel: 0300 123 2220. E-Mail: complaints@ipso.co.uk. Enquiries: inquiries@ipso.co.uk.

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Family thrilled as...

Vital drug approved

Ron was pleased that The GEM was able to highlight his plight and is shown with Vale MP Alun Cairns.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"I am incredibly grateful to the community in Dinas Powys and the wider Vale for coming out in such numbers to support our campaign to see Mr Squires receive such an important drug.

"The local health board has reacted in a positive way to help Ron, but the campaign cannot stop here.

"The support from The GEM played a hugely important role in raising awareness of the problems faced by Mr Squires.

"The case serves to highlight the impact of health policy and the allocation of cancer drugs in Wales, and I will continue to do all I can to help other families facing similar challenges in the Vale."

A spokesman for Cardiff and Vale University Health Board said it was unable to comment on individual cases, but did add: "The health board can confirm that it has considered all the evidence in relation to the provision of this medicine.

"We are pleased to confirm that in light of this review it has now approved this medicine for use for appropriate patients during the period while we await the final confirmation of the NICE decision."

Rhws pupils prove sharing *is* caring!

CHRISTMAS is a time for charity, a time to think of others – so this year, Rhws Primary School held its first Toys for Ty Hafan Day.

As part of their festive Friday arrangements, the children were asked to donate a present for the children at the hospice at Sully. So on the last Friday of term, all the children and staff dressed in their finest festive clothes and had a whole school sing-along in the hall, with the teachers doing their annual rendition of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'.

"Our amazing parents donated presents in their hundreds and we thank them so much for their generosity," added Mrs Lynn, the headteacher.

Mrs Lynn, Mr Gibson and three year-5 pupils took all the gifts down to Ty Hafan on Friday afternoon. The staff at Ty Hafan were incredibly grateful for the kind donations. Well done to everyone at Rhws Primary for showing that Christmas really is a time to share with others.

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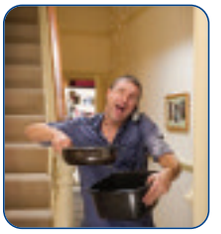

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Junior school scores high marks

LEFT: Staff at Murch Junior School celebrate their inspection results.

A "very clear sense of purpose and direction" and "very good links with the local infant school" has seen Murch Junior School awarded a 'good' rating in every area of its recent Estyn inspection.

The report applauded the "well-qualified and experienced staff" and how their use of "innovative techniques and resources promotes the very enthusiastic engagement of pupils in their learning", as well as the "welcoming and respectful ethos" of the school.

Both the current performance of the school and its prospects for improvement were praised as 'good' by the inspection team.

The report also praised acting headteacher Emma Messer, who took on the role in September and has been working with the headteacher of Dinas Powys Infants' School Julie Thompson, who supported the school throughout the inspection ahead of their amalgamation in January.

The report said: "In a short time, she has shared her vision effectively with the senior management team, staff and governors. She works closely with the very experienced headteacher of the local infant school.

"They effectively build upon the strengths of both schools and develop a shared vision for the future."

The amalgamation will see Murch Junior School discontinued, and a new single phase primary school instated across the two sites under a single governing body and headteacher.

PENARTH RAMBLERS TAKE A STROLL CLOSE TO HOME

THE shortest day of the year started off wet and breezy, and by common consent, the five Penarth and District Ramblers who met leader Joy at the Barry Waterfront, decided to abandon the planned walk at Monknash and stayed local.

Leaving the Waterfront and heading through the railway tunnel into Broad Street, then via Windsor Road and Park Road and passing the remains of Barry Castle to join the narrow path through Coed yr Odyn, they dropped downhill through Cliffwood into Porthkerry Park.

Crossing the muddy main meadow and the pitch and putt course, a short steep climb through the wood led to St Curig's Church in Porthkerry village, where the shelter in the churchyard was utilised during morning coffee.

Slithering down the path beside Church Farm and going under the tall Porthkerry Viaduct before crossing the Barry Brook, a climb up the Golden Stairs led them onto the cliff at Marine Drive, where the Somerset coastline was partially obliterated by misty rain.

Descending towards the pebble beach at Cold Knap and crossing the site of the old Knap swimming pool, then the firm sand in the Old Harbour to Friar's Point, they descended into Whitmore Bay glad to be out of the blustery wind.

Making their way to the eastern shelter and passing the new beach huts and climbing wall before joining the Clement Colley Walk around the cliff to Jackson's Bay, large rocks were used as seating during lunch, while a mixture of sunshine and showers lit up the sky above the Bristol Channel.

Climbing up to Redbrink Crescent and passing the remains of the ancient St Baruch's Church they headed along Breaksea Drive and over the railway bridge past Maslin Park and up Archer Road to Barry Island school.

Then descending steps onto the old dockland where the new Asda store is beginning to take shape a short tramp along the waterfront led them back to their start.

On January 2, meet at 9am at the Viaduct car park, Porthkerry Park for the annual 9-mile moderate circular walk to the Blue Anchor for lunch; contact William on 01446 747239.

On January 3, meet at 9am at Cogan Leisure Centre for a 9.5-mile moderate walk taking in Llandough, the River Ely and Cardiff Bay; contact Geraint on 029 2051 5278.

On January 4, meet at 9.30am at the Barry Waterfront for a 6-mile easy/mod walk at Newton and Merthyr Mawr; contact Joy on 01446 737131.

Please access the Festival walks over the yuletide period at www.penarthramblers.wordpress.com. Programmes and membership advice can be obtained from Pam on 029 2025 5102.

Joy Strangward

Friends and Neighbours

FRIENDS and Neighbours had a very busy end of year programme, and visited The Wales Millennium Centre to see the award-winning production of Disney's *Lion King*, which had 26 different 'animals' and more than 700 costumes.

For many of the members it was their first visit to this magnificent building and they were wowed by the performance.

December started with a visit to Swansea Christmas market and the year ended with the Christmas party at Brynhill Golf Club.

They were surprised when Santa appeared, courtesy of Barry Round Table, and chatted to members.

Alun Cairns MP dropped in and Jane Hutt AM joined members for lunch.

Entertainment followed the lunch and they were all given a present and mug filled with sweets and biscuits.

Friends and Neighbours will resume in February, when memberships will be due. *Contact 01446 400044 for further information.*

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Festive news round-up from Barry Comprehensive School

Year-7 students with their fantastic Yule logs.

Gifts for children

CANTEEN staff at Barry Comprehensive School dressed for the occasion at the end of term – and the festive costumes were a perfect way to make the Christmas lunch menu even more special.

Every year students and staff at Barry Comprehensive collect gifts to take to the Children's Hospital.

The school has been a long-standing supporter of the LATCH charity, delivering presents to the oncology clinic at Llandough Hospital for many years and is now continuing the tradition at the University of Wales Hospital in Cardiff. **AC**

Canteen staff dressed for the occasion.

Edible Yule logs

Year-7 students spent Christmas week designing and making edible Christmas decorations to go on Yule logs as part of their catering lessons.

Corey, Lewis and Connor delivered craft materials and Christmas presents to the children's hospital.

TIME TO GET FIT

JOIN Cardio Core Fitness Limited at a launch on Friday, January 2 from 11am-1pm and 5.30pm-7.30pm, Unit 2C and 2D, Palmersvale Business Centre, Palmerston Road, Barry, CF63 2XA (behind VFM Meat Superstore). No entrance fee!

TESCO SAYS 'NO' TO HIGHLIGHT PARK POST OFFICE

VALE MP Alun Cairns has said he is determined to find a new home for the Post Office in Highlight Park, after Tesco confirmed it will be unable to house a Post Office facility at the store.

Mr Cairns said: "I am very disappointed, and surprised, that Tesco is not able to take up my proposal to house a local Post Office in the store serving the residents of Highlight Park.

"The company looked very closely at my suggestions for the use of unused space in the store, and although they will be unable to provide space in the short term, I will keep talking to Tesco should circumstances change.

"After having successfully gained an extension for the current Post Office sited at Lloyds Pharmacy until the end of this year, I will leave no stone unturned to ensure that local residents in Highlight Park have access to an essential local service.

"The Government is committed to ensuring communities have access to a local Post Office, and I will now seek to find an alternative site nearby."

Hundreds of candles as church floodlit for service in Holton Road

BARRY Town Council's civic candlelit carol service at the Church of St Mary the Blessed Virgin on Holton Road was attended by the Mayors of Barry, and the Vale of Glamorgan, local AM Jane Hutt and town and Vale councillors – some of whom gave readings in between the carols.

The service was led by Fr Ben Andrews, Mayor's Chaplain and Rector of the Parish of Cadoxton-Juxta-Barry.

The church was lit by hundreds of candles and this year's service had a new look as local company JPL Sound & Communications provided floodlighting to the outside of St Mary's and coloured architectural lighting to the interior of the church.

JPL also donated and decorated a 7ft Christmas tree for the church and congregation.

The singing was led by the choir of St Mary's, accompanied on the organ by Mr Dylan Morgan.

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Welsh medium play group celebrates

PARENTS and community councillors in Dinas Powys were invited to Ysgol Meithrin, the Welsh medium play group for its Christmas festivities.

Led by Mrs Elinor Elias-Jones, the thriving play group meets at the Methodist Church Hall, off Mount Road. Many of the children are from non Welsh speaking homes, but quickly pick up the language through play and songs.

Mrs Elias Jones thanked the parents and grandparents for their support throughout the year.

She also welcomed councillors including Chris Franks, (chair), Margaret Hayley, Janie Jones, John Huw Williams and Val Hartrey.

SHADOWS CLUB

THE South Wales Shadows Club meets at 8pm on January 13, at Penarth Conservative Club, Stanwell Road (02920 309979) . All welcome.

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Learning about the history of Christmas melodies...

CLIVE SIMS, the speaker at Barry Men's Forum, explained how modern day Christmas carols had evolved from pagan rhymes and chants.

Even today, many traditional Christmas hymns are omitted from modern church song and hymn books because they are considered to be politically incorrect.

For thousands of years, the third week in December was celebrated as the winter Solstice. Rhymes were repeated by monks and priests to their congregations. Over the centuries it changed to our modern day Christmas celebration to commemorate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

Certain words were used in well known carols. Holly was considered to be the first tree in the greenwood; it became symbolic because it resembled the crown of thorns that Jesus wore and the berries resembled the colour of his blood. It was used as a household decoration and the best places were reserved for it.

It was thought to be a sign of new life and to have magical powers. Prince Albert introduced the first spruce Christmas tree to Britain in the reign of Queen Victoria.

For hundreds of years the Christmas hymns were sung in Latin. In the 13th Century, to commemorate the birth of Jesus, Saint Francis of Assisi introduced a crib in front of the altar as part of his Christmas Nativity plays.

In the play, the priest would gently rock the crib. For the first time, these Christmas songs were set to music and sung in their native tongue and not in Latin. They were sung by two men and a boy, as women were not allowed to sing in those days.

The modern tradition of touring carol singers was first established by the Anglo Saxons it was called 'Wassailing'. During the 12 days of Christmas, all the prosperous households prepared huge bowls of mulled cider and wine.

These bowls were called Wassails. A cup of the mulled drink was given to each carol singer that sang to the household. This then developed into 'Mumming' at which men and women wore masks and danced around the streets singing.

Over the years there have been many notable carols. During the Franco Russian War, on Christmas Eve, in 1870, the soldiers in the trenches sang 'O Holy Night'.

'O Come All Ye Faithful', was attributed to Bonny Prince Charlie after he fled to France. The faithful were the Jacobites trying to establish him as the King.

'I saw three ships', refers to the ships of the desert (camels) bringing the three wise men to Bethlehem.

Even Bono and U2 have recorded a cover version of the carol 'O come Emmanuel'. Their version is called 'White of Snow'.

After the festive celebrations on January 8, Roger Davies will be speaking on the topic of 'Jerusalem'.

The forum meets at Trinity Presbyterian Church Hall, Aberystwyth Crescent, every Thursday at 10.15am. New members are very welcome.

MC

The year ends on an exotic note!

THE last meeting of the year for Cadoxton (Barry) WI was really festive as Marilyn Tucker, the liaison officer, joined members for a buffet and entertainment.

After the Secret Santa and raffles, members were entertained by Seren Arabi, exotic Middle Eastern Dancers. The reasons behind the movements in the dances were explained and members were encouraged to join in.

The president thanked members, guests and dancers for a wonderful finish to an excellent year.

Meetings are held on the third Monday of the month at Victoria Park Community Centre at 7pm. Contact 01446 404891.

Party Highlight of the WI year!

AT the December afternoon meeting of Highlight Park WI, Jean Thomas showed everyone how to make a Christingle Candle.

The evening meeting was a very happy Christmas party; the food was supplied by members who were entertained by Mr Mark Thompson with music and jokes.

The first evening meeting is on January 20 at 7.15pm in the Community Hall. Visitors welcome.

Contact Jeanette on 01446 410139, or Pat on 01446 734283.

TUCK SHOP RAISES SUM OF £340 FOR CHARITY

Porthkerry church organ fund boosted

THE vicar and parishioners at St Curig's Church, Porthkerry, are engaged in fundraising activities to pay for the restoration of its unique church organ.

A music, mulled wine and mince pie evening was held on December 13 when local baritone Andrew Mathews, a solo winner at this year's National Eisteddfod opened the evening.

Ably accompanied by his brother, Simon, he sang pieces ranging from a Johnny Mathis ballad to a traditional Christmas carol. Jenny Lloyd, a cellist who had trained at the Royal Academy of Music, played several pieces accompanied on the piano by Avril Harding. One of the church organists, Heather Jenkins, then played several pieces.

Because the organ is dedicated to locals who lost their lives in the First World War, it was fitting that Margaret Wyatt and Ray Reynolds read readings connected to that conflict.

Rachel Oxley Green explained how 'Silent Night' came to be written and Graham Loveluck Edwards gave a rendition of Dylan Thomas' 'Schoolboy Christmas'.

John Reynolds was compere for the evening that had been put together by Avril Harding.

The efforts of everyone on this very enjoyable evening resulted in more than £400 being raised for the organ fund.

VALEPLUS, the Barry-based charity that provides learning and leisure opportunities for people with a learning disability, recently welcomed Rachael Toska to one of its popular Saturday workshops.

Rachael, who works for Admiral Insurance donated a cheque for £340 to the charity raised through the proceeds of a tuck shop which was then match-funded by the company.

Angharad Pritchard thanked Rachael and Admiral on behalf of ValePlus and stated that the donation would be used to improve the range of workshops available on a Saturday.

Anyone wishing to join the activities can visit the website on www.valeplus.org.uk or phone 01446 746691 for further details.

Resident's call over gulls...

'STOP FEEDING FLYING RATS!'

A Treharne resident in Barry has pleaded with fellow householders not to encourage the invasion of gulls by feeding them, *writes a GEM reporter*.

Jeff Heathfield told The GEM: "The gulls are out in force! At 8am on Sunday morning, they were being fed and squealing like witches, yet it is the middle of winter!

"They have taken root in Treharne and are waking everyone up."

Mr Heathfield said he was intrigued by a legal case just over a year ago which was significant in terms of what was happening in his area: "It was interesting to read that in October 2013, a lady from Sully was taken to court and had to pay a total of £1,022 for feeding these flying rats under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949.

"I hope the Vale Council will not make this an isolated case and will fill their coffers with plenty more of these inconsiderate people's money.

"From January 1, 2014, to September 21, 2014, 443 Pest Control Free Service Requests were Received by the council.

"I urge anyone who has a problem with gulls or rats to contact the Vale Environmental Health and help to get this problem controlled."

JUNIOR SCHOOL CHOIR ENTERTAINS

The choir entertains in Dinas Powys.

MURCH Junior School choir entertained at the Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern Christmas coffee morning when £185 was raised.

The audience enjoyed what could be the last public performance of the choir under its present name. The school is about to merge with the infant school at the start of next term.

Chair of DPVC, Coun John Fanshaw, said: "The Murch School has been faithful supporters of our events and we are confident of developing a good relationship with the new school."

DPVC will restart events on January 12 with a games afternoon in the Lee Hall, Britway Road at 1.30 pm. Transport can be arranged.

Contact 02920 513700 or email dpvc@btinternet.com for further information.

'Parking restrictions will make junction safer'

A BARRY councillor has welcomed plans by the Vale Council to install parking restrictions on one of the busiest town roads.

Independent councillor Richard Bertin has been supporting local residents in their calls for road safety improvements at the busy junction of Gladstone Road and Everard Street.

The council, after receiving no objections, has now decided to implement restricted parking at this location.

Coun Bertin said: "This is amazing news, as it will make this junction much safer. For quite some time residents have asked for action and it will now happen."

Island improvements are merely the start

FRIDAY, December 5, saw the completion of the newly-renovated eastern promenade on Barry Island, but the improvements are not stopping there.

The regeneration scheme, which included new beach huts, a traversing wall, viewing platforms, new footpath links, and new public toilets and baby changing facilities, is only the beginning of a wider project.

Coun Neil Moore, Leader of the Council, said: "Whilst I am very pleased with the regeneration works on the eastern promenade, anybody thinking that the completion of the eastern shelter regeneration scheme would see a lull in activity would be mistaken.

"We have already programmed a further set of works to further enhance the island and these works will now commence with a view to being completed before the start of the next season. This demonstrates our firm commitment to the Island and its crucial role in Barry and the wider Vale of Glamorgan."

Plans include further investment to upgrade paths and landscaping on the promenade gardens, improved toilet facilities at the western shelter, and improvements to public seating and lighting.

A further planned improvement already under way is the upgrading of the footpath between the car park and the breakwater to a footway-cycleway, which will then link to the new footway-cycleway provided at Friars Point earlier this year.

Director of development services, Rob Thomas, said: "The opening of the Eastern promenade following the multimillion regeneration project will bring increased confidence in Barry Island as a key visitor destination.

"The scheme has introduced new life to the eastern end of the promenade, and already the next phase of improvements has been scheduled."

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School crossing patrol winners are honoured

Katie Coates, School Crossing Patrol of the Year, receives her award from Coun Lis Burnett and Rob Thomas, Director of Development Services.

Colin Dowd (Penarth), Emma Foden (Barry Island), Rob Thomas, Julie Ellis (St Athan), Vanessa Carlson (Barry), John Rogers and Katie Coates, SCP of the Year, in front.

AT the annual awards presentation organised by the Vale Council's Road Safety team, the top award for School Crossing Patrol of the Year went to Katie Coates, who patrols outside Albert Primary School in Penarth, and has worked in the Vale for over 18 years.

Other awardwinners included Colin Dowd (Penarth, Sully and Dinas Powys area); Julie Ellis (Llantwit Major and the western Rural Vale); and Vanessa Carlson and Scott Jackson (Barry).

Co-ordinators and volunteers of the Kerbcraft child pedestrian training scheme were also thanked for their 13th successful year of working with the council. To date, over 5,000 children in the Vale alone have been trained, and approximately 300 adult volunteers have been recruited.

Winners and guests were treated to a buffet and fun road safety quiz. The Vale Council's Road Safety Officer, John Rogers, thanked everyone for attending the presentation.

He said: "Everyone here has played their part in contributing to road safety over the past year in the Vale."

LIFE-SAVING SESSION

WELSH Hearts are holding a free drop-in CPR and defibrillator training session on Saturday, January 17, and people can attend anytime from 10am-1pm at the Town Hall, High Street, Cowbridge.

A spokeswoman said: "Why not come along to our drop in session – you could help save someone's life one day!

"The course is free and refreshments will be provided. After the session, you will be given a certificate. Children 10 years and above are also very welcome to attend with their parents. You will receive training in vital life-saving skills to deal with emergencies."

Training will be given in CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resusitation), a first aid technique that is a combination of rescue breaths and chest compressions and training on how to use a defibrillator – a life saving machine used to shock a person's heart back into its normal rhythum after a cardiac arrest.

For more information, contact Welsh Hearts on 02920 786521, or email fundraising@welshhearts.org.

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13th annual concert huge hit with Ewenny audience

The Vale of Glamorgan Ensemble.

THE Vale of Glamorgan Ensemble was warmly welcomed back for its 13th annual concert at Ewenny Priory Church.

Ably hosted by double-bassist and Ensemble founder, Peter Fry, the evening was rich with song, story and anecdote.

Performed on the steps of the altar, beneath the impressive glass rood-screen and lit by flickering candlelight, the evening, which had sold out days in advance of the event, was a huge success.

The programme opened with Boyce's Symphony No1 in B flat major, and was followed by excerpts from Handel's *Messiah*. Llantwit soloist, Charlotte Ellett's performance here was breathtaking, leaving the audience in awe of her vocal range and sheer beauty of interpretation. Vivaldi's Concerto for two violins in A minor concluded the first half.

After an interval, fortified by mince pies and mulled wine, the second half started with the spirited Festive Suite in A major by Telemann, as well as pieces by Purcell, and Handel's Concerto Grosso in D major.

Light-hearted Christmas music concluded, what was roundly agreed to have been, a wonderful evening.

The Vale of Glamorgan Ensemble will return to Ewenny Priory Church, next December for their 14th annual concert as part of Ewenny Arts Festival.

Details of all events, including the forthcoming Ewenny 900 celebrations, will be available on the Ewenny festival website and facebook pages.

The Castaways celebrate Christmas at Castleland

THE Castaways club for older people living in the Vale, enjoyed a three-course Christmas lunch and entertainment, thanks to the generosity of Age Cymru, Barry Town Council and the Castleland Drop-In Centre.

Twenty-ive members of the club, with ages ranging from late 70s to mid-90s, were treated to lunch and a concert of carols and Christmas music. The event was made possible, thanks to grants received from Barry Town Council and Age Cymru, and to the volunteers at the Drop-In centre, who cooked and served the meal and arranged the after dinner entertainment.

A club member said: "We are very lucky to have received such generous support, as we are an independent club, and we rely on fundraising, grants and membership fees to keep going. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters our members had a Christmas lunch to remember."

The Castaways meets every Wednesday and Friday, at the Castleland Centre, for lunch bingo and friendship. New members are always welcome. For more information telephone 01446 734387.

VALE MP's VIEWPOINT

Wonderful news, as the new year promises an economic uplift

Vale MP **Alun Cairns** reports to GEM readers

2015 HAS arrived with much optimism. The past year has flown by, but so much has happened in Barry and the rural Vale in the past 12 months.

I have a huge amount of optimism for 2015, I have visited dozens of businesses in the past 12 months and I always taken the time to ask how things are at the coal face of the economy.

Businesses large and small all tell me that trade had improved across Barry and the Vale and they expect to be recruiting additional staff in the new year.

This is such wonderful news, and follows a national trend that sees a record number of people in employment in Britain. This is the sort of activity that we need to secure the recovery on a firm footing.

What is most pleasing is the sheer variety of industry in the Vale that is growing – small shops and major employers are recruiting and providing a boost to families at the start of a new year.

January is typically a busy month for those looking for a new career or opportunities, and the employment landscape is looking very healthy as unemployment continues to fall significantly in the Vale of Glamorgan.

In the past 12 months, the Government has made a number of business-friendly announcements – reform of business rates being a welcome significant change.

The reality is that any savings that can be made by business in terms of overheads can be re-invested in wages by recruiting people. A further increase in the personal tax allowance means people can take home more in their own pay packet and re-invest in the local economy.

The regeneration of Barry Island has taken several important steps in the past year – it is long overdue. Private sector investment has a vital role to play in bringing about a positive development on the fairground site. I am very pleased to see progress being made that will result, all being well, in the summer of 2015 seeing a welcome return of a top grade fairground.

I have met with interested parties on numerous occasions with one aim – reviving such a wonderful part of Barry and I will happily meet with anyone that has positive ideas about an area that has such an important role to play in the Vale of Glamorgan.

2015 is going to be the year that sets us off on a sustained period of growth and the continuation of the long-term economic plan. I want to see more jobs being created, businesses booming, and treasured parts of the Vale being revived for the long-term benefit of every local family.

May I take the opportunity to wish readers of The GEM a very happy and healthy 2015.

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It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

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Cloudy2Clear service the Vale, Bridgend, RCT and Porthcawl areas and Phil is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. *'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'*

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Pub quiz raises £1,000 for appeal...

But Jade (17) needs more funds so she can learn to walk

Jade is presented with a cheque for £1,000 from (left to right) Gareth Luff, John Dickinson, Sam Radovic (landlord) and Helen Embling.

THE Prince of Wales public house in Coychurch held its Christmas charity quiz and raffle, when a special guest was Jade Owen, who lives in Bridgend with her mum, dad and two younger siblings. Jade was born with Diplegic Cerebral Palsy, and is unable to walk.

After taking an active part in the quiz, the 17-year-old was presented with a cheque for £1,000 towards her fundraising for a life-changing operation she hopes to have next summer.

There is some hope from the centre of world excellence for this condition in St Louis, Missouri, USA. Dr Park performs an operation called Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy (SDR), in which dead nerve endings are cut away from the spine to permit the 'good' nerves to perform more effectively. This improves posture and allows the patients to get their feet flat on the ground which in turn allows them to walk unaided. Jade draws confidence from a young lad in Bridgend who has already had the operation and is now playing football with his friends.

It is not possible to describe the support given to Jade by all her family who are totally dedicated to Jade's dream of being able to walk. The closeness of the family members and their devotion to the cause is unsurpassed.

They all need help in achieving a dream which on the face of it seems impossible, but in reality is attainable.

The list of things to pay for is very long, but includes two operations, airfares for Jade and her parents, a month's stay in the USA, post-care physiotherapy in the UK, and a post-operation follow-up trip to the USA after about six months.

As you can guess this does not come cheap. Jade, and the unending effort of her family, have so far raised about £30,000. At least another £15,000 to £20,000 is required.

Dr Park will see Jade in the UK in about April; the plan is that her operation will be scheduled for June – but this needs the money to be in place.

Anything that anyone can do will be appreciated. If you wish to donate, Google Jade and go to the Tree of Hope website to make a donation.

The Tree of Hope is the registered charity which is looking after the funding for Jade. Your donation will help Jade with her dream and will make you one of her angels.

Alison Dickinson

Vale Photographic Club news

WELCOME to the first of a regular column highlighting the activities of the Vale Photographic Club.

We are a small friendly group who meet every Friday from September to July at 7.15pm in the Ystradowen village hall (starting back January 16).

We aim to arrange a varied and interesting programme to suit all tastes and levels of ability. Events include presentations from guest speakers and our own members, practical sessions, demonstrations, social outings, photographic trips and a number of competitions.

If you were lucky enough to receive a new camera from Santa this year, regardless of ability or type of camera, why not consider joining? Attendance is £2 on the night, with membership open to anyone aged 16 and above. Please note, potential members aged 16-18 will need to be accompanied by a suitable adult.

For those who wish to enter, we hold a number of internal competitions, judged by a guest speaker, with winning entries going on to represent the Vale at national level (don't be put off, this is purely optional!).

A selection of winning entries from our last competition are shown – 'Reflective Moments' by Mike Davies, 'Tears of a Clown' by Bridget 'Craddock and Amber Nectar' by Gareth Williams.

For further information on the club, visit our website at http://www.vale-photographic-club.co.uk, join our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/groups/ValePhotographicClub/, or simply turn up to a club evening. Whether you're looking to develop your skills as a serious photographer, just starting out with a new camera, or simply looking to take better photographs of the kids, you'll be most welcome.

ANDREW COLEMAN

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Photographers' nature snaps win awards

Sheryl Ewe from the Vale of Glamorgan, winner of the 12-18 category.

Jacob Pearce from Maesteg, winner of the under-11 category.

WITH £450 of high street vouchers up for grabs, young people aged 18 or under were asked to send in their snaps showing their friends enjoying the natural environment for a Natural Resources Wales (NRW) photo competition.

In the first category, for children aged 11 or under, Jacob Pearce (10) from St Mary's and St Patrick's Primary in Maesteg, Bridgend took first place for his moody photo of a kite being flown on a beach against a cloudy backdrop. The judges were impressed by how the photo captured all the natural elements – water, land and air – to create a dramatic image.

In the 12 to 18-year-olds category Sheryl Ewe (17) from Atlantic College in the Vale, snapped up first prize for her striking photo of friends running into the sea at sundown.

The judges were impressed with Sheryl's use of natural light to create a powerful image.

Second place went to Nathan Pycroft (15) from Ysgol Brynrefail in Gwynedd and third place went to Josephine Foong Hui Wen (18) from Atlantic College, for her explosive photo of a group of friends leaping into the air on a beach.

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Pupils help the Big Wrap

Jane Hutt with Big Wrap volunteers and pupils from Ysgol Bro Morgannwg.

THE Vale Foodbank again organised The Big Wrap this year, providing Christmas gifts and food hampers for hundreds of children and their families across the area.

All those who receive gifts donated by the community are referred from agencies in the statutory and voluntary sector.

Vale AM Jane Hutt visited the volunteers, including pupils from Ysgol Bro Morgannwg, to thank them for their hard work and commitment.

New Year's Honours awards for local people

LOCAL people honoured in the New Year's Honours List include the following:

Melville Stanley Evans of Pontyclun received an OBE for services to the NHS in Wales.

Mrs Shirley Rose Davis-Fox of ISA Training, Bridgend, received an MBE for services to the hairdressing industry.

Mrs Judyth Hilary Jenkins, head of nutrition and dietary services in Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust, received an MBE for services to people's health and wellbeing in Wales.

Mrs Jennifer Ann Morgan of Penyfai, senior manager at Woodlands High Special School, received an MBE for services to special education and the community in Cardiff.

Mrs Karyl Carter of Heol y Cyw, Stroke Association co-ordinator for Bridgend, received a BEM for services to stroke survivors.

HOSPITALS' DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS HONOURED AT FESTIVE CELEBRATION

THE tireless work of ABMU's army of volunteers was recognised at a special pre-Christmas celebration.

Volunteers provide an invaluable service in hospitals and other centres in Bridgend, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

Around 140 of them, representing the almost 500 people now volunteering with the health board, attended the inaugural thank-you event at the Aberavon Beach Hotel in Port Talbot.

ABMU chairman Andrew Davies, who joined the guests on the day, said: "This is our very first thank-you event for the hundreds of volunteers that help us, day in, day out, particularly in our four acute hospitals.

"Our volunteers help patients, their families and their friends through often very difficult times. We hope this is going to be an annual event by which we, as a health board, can say a very big thank you to all our volunteers."

The guests represented volunteering at Morriston, Singleton, Princess of Wales, Neath Port Talbot and Maesteg Hospitals, along with Port Talbot Resource Centre, chaplaincy and ABMU's three palliative care units.

Entertainment included singing performances by Nicky Taliesin and Hannah Rix, fresh from their appearance in *White Christmas* at Cardiff's New Theatre, and a quiz.

ABMU interim volunteer manager Paul Jones said: "Volunteering is vital to the organisation. We have approaching 500 volunteers at present and those numbers will be increasing as we continue to develop.

"We provide an invaluable service that really does those little extra things that perhaps staff haven't always got the time to do, that volunteers take pride in doing.

"It could be befriending, running errands for patients or just providing a friendly face to sit and chat to. That's the sort of value they bring to the organisation."

Among the guests was Anne-Marie Winslade, who lives in Llantwit Major and started volunteering at Princess of Wales Hospital, where she helps run the information desk, 15 years ago. She said: "The hospital has served my family for quite some years and so it's a way of giving back. I enjoy meeting the public and hopefully make somebody's experience in the hospital a little less stressful.

"It does wonders for your self-esteem when somebody thanks you – and they do that most often."

For Annette Francis, being a maternity ward volunteer in Singleton Hospital is a dream come true.

Annette of Llansamlet started three months ago but enjoys it so much she is now planning to train for a career there.

"It has given me a big chance and I'm very proud and privileged to be given this position," she said.

Annette Francis from Swansea, a maternity volunteer in Singleton Hospital.

Anne-Marie Winslade, who has volunteered at Princess of Wales Hospital for 15 years.

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THE TREE FESTIVALS LIGHT UP CHURCHES

Festive trees at the various festivals.

CHURCHES throughout south Wales brightened the run-up to Christmas with hundreds of festive trees.

The 12ft high angel for Alzheimers's tree, crowned by a halo and wings and made up of bunting and wall hangings for the Rhondda Cynon Taff dementia care homes was one of the many trees on display at the Christmas tree festival at Llantrisant Church.

Throughout the year, volunteers and members of the church's Click and Chatter group knitted the decorations that adorn the tree.

The knitted theme continued in Bridgend with a knitters group run by St Mary's Church, Nolton decorating their tree with leaves which will be unpicked and then stitched together to make blankets for the homeless.

Canon Mike Komor, Rector of Coity, Nolton and Brackla with Coychurch, said: "It's the eighth year for our popular five-day Christmas Tree festival and this year we had 52 trees on show.

"Various groups ranging from schools to charities come in and decorate a tree along a particular theme and then each year we choose a different charity to support from the proceeds. This year we supported Bro Morgannwg Baby Loss Group and raised £1,400."

Other events included the Christmas Tree Festival at All Saint's Church, Porthcawl, which had 73 trees on display.

Parish priest Father Craig Vaughan said: "The festival was run in conjunction with Rotary Porthcawl and raised around £1,250 – with the money split between the parish and the Rotary's charities.

"As the amount of money raised shows, it was very successful and deepened the links we have in this parish with local community organisations and the schools."

Out and About with The GEM

Jolie's Unbroken is an incredible story, but is predictably played out...

ACTORS who turn to the director's chair generally manage to be reasonably successful; running across the ages, the likes of Clint Eastwood, Ben Affleck and Jon Favreau have all achieved acclaim behind the camera.

However, few actresses make the jump, with Angelina Jolie putting her director's hat on with *Unbroken*.

This true-life World War Two-set story tells of Louis Zamperini (Jack O'Connell), an Olympian who finds himself downed in the ocean when a flight goes wrong, leaving him to survive with his crew in the water for 47 days.

However, when Zamperini is rescued, it's by the Japanese navy and he is taken to a prisoner of war camp where his life is made a living hell, particularly by a sadistic sergeant known as 'the Bird' (Takamasa Ishihara)...

At this time of year, true-life stories are ten-a-penny in cinemas, no doubt in part due to the appealing nature of them in relation to the awards season (having accounted for three of the past four best picture winners at the Academy Awards).

What sets *Unbroken* apart is the sheer incredible nature of the story, how a man went from being an Olympian to being pushed to the very end of his tether – you can be pretty sure that Zamperini's nickname wasn't 'Lucky Louis'!

Considering this is Angelina Jolie's second effort behind the camera (her first, *In the Land of Blood and Honey*, didn't find a home on these shores) it's a story crafted with an incredible eye for the visual, and also sees

by GARETH JAMIESON

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Jolie marshall excellent performances from the cast. However, despite the nature of the story, it all feels a little too predictable and very rarely does it take you by surprise.

What does surprise is just how composed and well versed Jolie is considering this is her sophomore effort. Opening with a gorgeous sunrise peppered with bombers heading out on a mission, the film never fails to look wonderful, whether it's the open stretch of sea Zamperini and company find themselves stranded in, or the cruel, austere brutality of the prisoner of war camp.

Jolie manages to couple this with a script (that involves, oddly enough, the Coen brothers) that burns slowly and captures the key points of Zamperini's life – his Olympic running, the time he spent at sea and the time in the POW camp – but doesn't really shade in the spaces around him.

One development, which receives its pay-off in the closing crawl that these films are seemingly contractually obligated to provide, would have made for an intriguing postscript to the story on screen rather than simply explained away in text.

As such, while the tale is one that you would be hard-pressed to create as a work of fiction, it ultimately comes off feeling as though it's been filtered through a checklist for these grandstanding biopics, the faint aroma of those that have gone before (the likes of *Mandela* are evoked by the prison scenes, for example) lingering long after the credits have rolled.

If 2014 was a breakout year for Jack O'Connell, then the actor hasn't started the new one off sluggishly at all on the basis of this turn. If *Starred Up* and *'71* showed an actor with an incredible slow-burning intensity (and a predilection towards masochism, given how roughed-up he is in those two films), then *Unbroken* continues that trend; he holds the film well, and the only drawback is the lack of depth the script gives him.

The rest of the cast isn't short on quality but don't get much in terms of screen time, with Takamasa Ishihara's cold-blooded sergeant grabbing the majority of it with a performance that is chilling in its execution but again struggles to break free from the lack of dimension afforded by the screenplay.

It's the script's lack of depth and inability to wholly shake off the shackles of cliché that affect *Unbroken*, because outside that it is a very impressive film indeed; but with a screenplay weighed down by these faults it becomes purely a very good one.

VERDICT – As impressive as Angelina Jolie's second directorial effort is, and coupled with a superb lead performance from ever-developing Jack O'Connell, ultimately *Unbroken* is broken by a feeling of the all-too-familiar. However the incredible nature of such an amazing story will keep you captivated. Enjoyable.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *Rescue Dawn* (2006), *Castaway* (2000).

Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D858: The rollover of £500 was not won this week.

- **£2,000: 286422**.
- **£10:** 973377, 115726, 845595, 381378, 538786, 557457, 373530, 262615, 704321, 781410, 659550, 554961, 821984, 749649, 365696, 210523, 856204, 618751, 327907, 310794.
- **£5:** 550734, 702085, 169906, 991843, 786092, 163922, 107340, 741680, 889441, 188698, 985335, 595978, 619901, 467466, 180101, 105275, 703319, 742810, 773342, 334565, 554070, 106577, 673084, 567252, 984171, 541553, 333743, 371611, 125723, 884550, 360693, 964121, 200550, 625856, 393564, 960713, 815642, 301399, 250955, 257259, 811521, 254410, 651496, 838148, 322281, 529482, 893910, 745635, 423035, 523015, 247408, 153762, 819599, 438395, 552857, 842762, 278780, 310392, 485143, 1623.

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D859:

- **£1,000 rollover:**
- **£2,000: 753075**.
- **£10:** 481347; 394071; 223595; 216004; 144895; 865053; 529443; 537505; 468587; 468357; 251593; 763336; 853058; 566065; 718125; 787672; 242446; 675762; 545089; 1353. 628790.
- **£5:** 628790; 658761; 747601; 408866; 115026; 707564; 479690; 411475; 363953; 448234; 780615; 232950; 630142; 209343; 858617; 118100; 632017; 377706; 520518; 686317; 278608; 155891; 369086; 936230; 742806; 791726; 557281; 348016; 250126; 425105; 878710; 259515; 506045; 819259; 117137; 422786; 801651; 885199; 443587; 435939; 325581; 634404; 639760; 461784; 102811; 173993; 840006; 667185; 377460; 935454; 785822; 293029; 709875; 274079; 682312; 159990; 346405; 816448; 356437; 2075.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above.

For lottery information please telephone 029 2053 2300.

Film will relate the Welsh Guards' story

A NEW Ogmore-based company, Centennial Film has marked the centenary of the Welsh Guards with an imaginative project.

The Heart of the Dragon – the Welsh Guards Story is a cinema documentary that tells the story of this world-famous regiment, whose Colonel is Prince Charles.

It is privately financed by investors from Xénos, the Wales Business Angels Network – and by former members of the Welsh Guards.

The 90-minute film will relate the story of the regiment from its birth in the Great War – while still catching its centenary events on St David's Day 2015.

The Welsh Guards at 'Trooping of the Colour'.

Viewers will learn of the Welsh Guards' heroic actions in two world wars and in Aden, Northern Ireland, the Falklands and, more recently, Afghanistan.

Set against a Welsh backdrop, the film will have a haunting soundtrack that reveals how successions of Welsh Guardsmen made their native music integral to life in the regiment.

The film will be released soon after VE Day 2015, opening in cinemas in Wales before it is shown on TV and released on DVD. Xénos is part of the Finance Wales Group, one of the UK's largest SME investors. The group has invested over £353 million through more than 3,425 investments and manages funds in access of £400 million.

YOUR CHANCE TO JOIN NEW DANCE COMPANY

THE Vale Council's arts development department has created 'aDvance Dance', a contemporary dance company for young people aged 14 -18, by working together with arts teams in other local authority areas and National Youth Dance Wales.

Now in its second year, auditions are fast approaching for young people to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity to study contemporary dance with internationally renowned dance professionals.

Auditions are being held on January 10 at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cardiff.

The three-hour audition will include a contemporary technique class, a ballet class and a short presentation for dancers, parents and dance-leaders about the aDvance programme.

Coun Gwyn John, cabinet member for arts and culture, said: "This project is part of our collaboration with 'Arts Connect' a partnership between five local authority areas. Here in the Vale we promote health and wellbeing through the arts development services.

"This dance opportunity is a great way for young people to get fit and healthy while enjoying classes taught by professional dancers. It's also an opportunity to learn new dance moves and enhance your skills to further forward your education and career."

If you are aged between 14-18, are already dancing on a regular basis, live in the Vale, Bridgend, Merthyr, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Caerphilly or Rhondda Cynon Taf, and you are able to give one Saturday a month to aDvance your dance skills, then get in touch and register your interest by telephoning NYDW on 029 2026 5060 or emailing nyaw@nyaw.co.uk with 'aDvance' in the subject line.

You need to provide your name, age, date of birth, telephone number and your dance school, organisation or group.

Confirmation about your audition place and further details will be sent once you have registered.

If you want further information about the dance training course please contact the Arts Development team on 01446 709805 or any of the other arts development services in the local authority areas listed.

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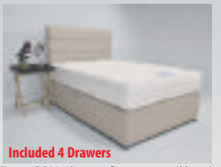

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FESTIVE CELEBRATION AS 78 OAPs TAKE A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE AT WENVOE

A TOTAL of 78 pensioners gathered for a Christmas party in Mary Immaculate High School, Wenvoe and enjoyed singing, dancing, food, and a visit from Santa, plus a trip down memory lane.

"We would like to thank all the companies who donated to the school and the staff and pupils for all their hard work," a spokeswoman said.

Flights doubled from Cardiff to Lanzarote

THOMSON and First Choice have announced that in winter 2015/16 they will be introducing a second weekly flight to Lanzarote from Cardiff Airport.

The move is part of the leading holiday company's strategy to ensure customers across the UK can fly from their local airport and stay at the best hotels in some of the most exciting destinations, they stated.

"The additional capacity to Lanzarote is also part of being able to offer customers more flexibility, such as the opportunity to take advantage of varying durations – not just the standard seven and 14 night stays.

"Customers from Cardiff will now have even easier access to some of Thomson and First Choice's most popular flagship hotels on the island, such as Thomson Couples Hotel H10 Timanfaya Palace and Thomson Platinum Hotel Natura Palace," said Karen Switzer, Director of Aviation Planning for Thomson and First Choice.

"Lanzarote is a really popular destination for our customers almost all year round, so it is great to offer the additional capacity from Cardiff Airport. We know that flying from your local airport is really valued by our customers and is part of our strategy to enhance their overall holiday experience."

Spencer Birns, Aviation Business Development Director at Cardiff Airport said: "We are really pleased with Thomson and First Choice's decision to add extra capacity to Lanzarote next winter. There is big demand in Wales for the Canary Islands and now our customers are being offered more travel options to popular holiday destinations from Cardiff Airport."

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS FOR EU FUNDING – *but hard choices remain*

THE Christmas season provides an opportunity to reflect on the past year and prepare for the next with the help of family and friends, sharing time away from the political fray.

This Christmas has been no exception, with the added benefit of spending time at many candlelit concerts and services across the Vale of Glamorgan over the past few weeks – from Ewenny Priory to St Mary's and All Saints Churches in Barry – as well as memorable concerts and walks in the Vale; all providing thinking time and time to reflect

The walks have mainly been in the sunshine, following a number of footpaths and guides, including the Wales Coast Path, Valeways, Barry Heart Walk and the new Vale Trails supported by Creative Rural Communities as part of the Rural Development Plan. The 'Haunted Field Walk' from St Nicholas Church to Tinkinswood and St Lythans Burial Chambers via Dyffryn Gardens was wonderful on Christmas Eve.

As the Vale Trail guide reminds us, these neolithic tombs were built almost 6,000 years ago. Reflecting on this can put our present daily worries and strains into perspective.

Barry island was also lit with sunshine on Christmas Day with children enjoying the magnificent new climbing wall and admiring the new beach huts as we walked over to Jacksons Bay.

Despite the rain, our Valeways Walk from Cowbridge through Llanblethian and over to Llandough, Llanfair St Mary Church and St Hilary on Boxing Day, helped blow away the cobwebs.

One of the many events I enjoyed before Christmas was the celebration of the work of Creative Rural Communities which was held in Llantwit Major, to present and promote many of the initiatives funded over a six-year £7.7m programme of investment, with European Union and Welsh Government finance, supported by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Congratulations to local farmer Norman Jenkins and Mandy Davies of the Vale of Glamorgan Tourist Association, who chaired the Vale of Glamorgan Rural Partnership and Local Action Group, steering this investment through so successfully, and benefiting the private, voluntary and public sectors in the rural Vale. See www.creativeruralcommunities.co.uk for more information.

I realise very clearly that there will be new opportunities in the New Year for the further regeneration of Barry and the rural Vale with European Union investment, matched by Welsh Government funding, but these opportunities will only come about if we make difficult choices with our reducing budgets.

The Chancellor's Autumn Statement fell flat when it emerged he was planning more draconian cuts to our public finances, already stripped back by 9 per cent over the past five years.

For too many this Christmas, the Vale Foodbank and Big Wrap volunteers have provided the food, as well as the presents for children and families with low incomes.

To provide for investment in skills for better paid jobs with good transport links and decent housing, is our goal as a Welsh Government, alongside continued and increased support for the NHS.

Viewing the new Newydd housing scheme in Thompson Street, partly financed with Welsh Government Social Housing Grant, was a great thrill before Christmas after the first tenants moved in on November 24.

It was equally exciting to meet the new residents of Golau Garedig located in the heart of Barry, who were settling in to their new homes in this £7m Welsh Government funded Extra Care facility.

Our investment in the Metro will help achieve better transport links, attracting European funding alongside other major cities in the UK and Europe. This is a priority for our Wales' Infrastructure Investment Plan and locally I am keen to see enhanced services on the Vale line from Barry to Bridgend for commuters, as well as for passengers to Cardiff Airport

There is so much we can do together in Wales, working with the public, private and voluntary sector, listening to and respecting each other, making decisions about what is essential for the economy and for social justice to support the vulnerable and to give everyone a chance.

Happy New Year.

ASSEMBLY NOTES

by **Jane Hutt AM** *(Minister for Finance)*

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Super mum Donatella gives birth to 11 kittens!

A RESCUED cat had her paws full this Christmas after giving birth to a staggering 11 kittens – one of the largest litters on record.

Tabby Donatella astounded staff at Cats Protection's Bridgend Adoption Centre after she went into labour in December and produced her bumper brood.

Although one was sadly stillborn, the 10 remaining kittens and their mother all appeared in good health after a five-hour labour.

Donatella, thought to be aged around one-year-old, was handed into the charity just a week earlier after a householder who had been feeding her noticed she was heavily pregnant. Cats usually give birth to an average of three to six kittens, with larger litters normally resulting in a higher mortality rate.

The world's largest litter was born in 1970 when a Burmese/Siamese cat gave birth to 19 kittens, four of which were stillborn.

Cats Protection's Bridgend Adoption Centre Manager Sue Dobbs said: "I've never seen this many kittens in one litter my 16 years at the centre. We just couldn't believe our eyes as they kept coming.

"Donatella is a tiny cat, and having been a stray she is also very underweight. I thought she may have five or six, but I wouldn't have been surprised if she had lost some of them considering her poor condition. So to have this many surviving kittens is incredible.

"Despite all she's been through she is an amazing mum, she's been very calm and attentive to all her babies.

"At the moment we're going to give her the chance to raise them all, but we'll be keeping a close eye on her and monitoring their growth rates and we expect we may need to help by bottle-feeding some of the kittens. The main challenge at the outset was to ensure all of them got some of the vital first milk from their mother to help their immune systems.

"All being well, Donatella and her kittens will be ready for new homes from February next year."

Cats Protection's Clinical Veterinary Officer Beth Skillings said it was rare for such a large number to be born alive.

"It's hard not to find Donatella's story heart-warming, especially at this time of year. But it's important to remember this is not a fairytale – Donatella was a stray who has been through quite an ordeal to carry and give birth to so many kittens.

"She is lucky that someone noticed her and handed her into us as it is likely that many more of her kittens would have perished otherwise.

"Of course the kittens are adorable, but Donatella's story does show why it is so important cats are neutered. She would have had a tough life as an un-neutered stray, and if they had survived being born on the streets, her kittens would have faced a similar plight."

With so many new kittens, the charity is appealing to the public to come up with names for them via its Facebook page. Cat lovers can make their suggestions by visiting www.facebook.com/catsprotection.

CONCERT EVOKES TIMELESS SPIRIT OF JOY AT CHRISTMAS

The choir with the Mayor of Barry, Coun Jeff Evans and the Mayor of the Vale, Coun Howard Hamilton.

THE annual carol concert of Barry Male Voice Choir at St Mary's Church, Barry, brought an appropriate start to the town's Christmas celebrations.

A sense of wonder and joy which filled the church was created by the choir, the RAF St Athan Voluntary Band and Cor Ysgol St Baruc. The depth of sound was further enhanced by the tuneful singing of the large enthusiastic congregation.

Congratulations are to be offered to musical directors Dorothy Connell, Alan Bourne, Delwyn Williams and accompanist Emma Arscott for their contributions to the timeless reminder of the spirit of Christmas.

This year's fundraising concert was in aid of Amelia Trust, which provides valuable support for disadvantaged youth. **GJ**

Cor Ysgol St Baruc.

Gold medal gymnast Frankie stars at the Ty Hafan panto!

Commonwealth Games gold medallist Frankie Jones brought the energy of the worldwide gymnastics stage to Tŷ Hafan Children's Hospice, when she stopped by to join in with its annual Christmas pantomime.

The rhythmic gymnastics star, who represented Wales at three successive Commonwealth Games, dropped by to take part in its Disney-themed pantomime as part of the hospice's 'Precious Moments' campaign.

The 24-year-old from Cardiff ended her gymnastics career on a high earlier this year after claiming Wales' first gold medal of the 2014 Commonwealth Games in the rhythmic gymnastics discipline.

Now the Commonwealth medallist is calling on the public to contribute towards creating more special moments for children, especially during the festive season, after taking time out from her busy schedule to support Tŷ Hafan this Christmas.

Frankie said: "The work that Tŷ Hafan does is so important that I was more than delighted to have been able to help out here today, and had a great time meeting the children and their families too.

"Tŷ Hafan does the most remarkable job to ensure these families are able to celebrate Christmas with the care and the support that they need, and I'd urge anyone thinking about supporting a charity this Christmas to bear them in mind."

Having now retired from the sport, Frankie has just been appointed athlete adviser to the Commonwealth Games Wales board until 2018, in a role where she will offer advice on how Welsh athletes can succeed at the Gold Coast Games in four years' time.

Frankie Jones with Santa and Noah Hopson.

Meanwhile, Tŷ Hafan wants people to talk about their own 'precious moments' through social media to help continue providing support for life-limited children across South Wales in 2015.

Jenna Lewis, head of individual giving at Tŷ Hafan, said: "Life is all about those precious moments so we want people to think about their own most special memories and share them online.

"The support that Tŷ Hafan provides extends further than our hospice and is delivered in the family home, at hospital and in schools across Wales.

"Our hope is that the public will support our Christmas appeal so we can continue providing families with precious moments which they can cherish forever."

It costs £3.7m a year to provide the charity's state-of-the-art facilities at Sully and its support services to families out in the community.

An individual donation of £23 would provide an hour of care and support to a child and his or her family, but the charity is urging people to donate what they feel able as the whole operation depends on the generosity of the public.

To make a donation, go to www.tyhafan.org/precious.

Share your own precious moments by sending a tweet to @tyhafan with the #preciousmoments hashtag.

'Law now on side of guide dogs' says the Ogmore MP

OGMORE MP Huw Irranca-Davies was thanked by national charity, Guide Dogs, for his work in helping change the law to protect guide dogs from attacks by other dogs.

After a long campaign, thanks to the strong personal support of shadow Defra Minister Huw Irranca-Davies and other Members of Parliament, Guide Dogs succeeded in convincing the UK Government to amend the Dangerous Dogs Act.

The changes create sentences for irresponsible owners who allow their dogs to attack a guide dog. The law now considers an attack on an assistance dog to be aggravated assault. This will help protect assistant dogs and their owners

In Wales there are 252 guide dog owners. The new law will allow them to keep the dogs they rely on for an independent life safe from attack.

From this year, any attack on an assistant dog by another dog carries a maximum sentence of three years in prison for the owner.

Guide Dogs campaigns' manager James White said his organisation was very grateful for all the support given by Mr Irranca-Davies in getting the law changed.

Mr Irranca-Davies said: "For many people in Wales and the rest of the UK, an assistant dog is the only way they can lead an independent life. They should have the peace of mind that their dog will be safe from attack. The change in law will really help make this the case. For the 252 guide dog owners in Wales, the law is now on their side."

FoE meeting

THE next meeting of Barry&Vale Friends of the Earth will be at 7.30pm on January 6 in Castle Hotel, Jewel Street, Barry.

Barry Milk Mates' Christmas party

CHILDREN and their mums were delighted as Santa paid a surprise visit and delivered gifts to everyone attending the Barry Milk Mates Christmas party.

Everyone had a great time and the peer supporters and health visitors thank all who have attended sessions this year and extend a welcome to all future breastfeeding mums who may need support or just a chat.

The group meet every Thursday at St David's Church hall, Winston Road, Barry, from 1pm-3pm.

OLDCASTLE PACT MEETING

THE Oldcastle PACT meeting will take place on January 28 at 6.30pm in Brynteg Lower School library, Bridgend.

GEM ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

In Business Update

New Pilates classes in Barry and Cowbridge

PILATES classes return with a busy schedule in the New Year: in Barry, there are two new courses for beginners – and classes are starting in Cowbridge at a new venue for Pilates at Curves Gym.

The new classes are six-week introductory courses ideal for those with little or no experience of Pilates. The course begins on January 8, at 9am, and on January 19, at 11.30am in Barry.

In Cowbridge, the course starts on Tuesday, January 20 at 10am.

With another six classes to choose from for beginners, improvers and intermediates, there is plenty of choice.

There are a few beginners' places available in the evening classes for new starters at 5.30pm on Monday and 7.15pm on Friday in Barry.

Classes are run by qualified Pilates teacher Sharon Sylvester. For more information, or to book your place, contact Sharon on 07830 085606; or see www.barrypilates.co.uk.

Beginners Pilates Classes

Barry New Beginners Courses
Start Thursday 8th January 9am
or Monday 19th January 11.30am

Cowbridge New Beginners Course
Starts Tuesday 20th January 10am

To book, or for more information:
Sharon 07830 085606
www.barrypilates.co.uk

Your tax return Accounted For!

YOU'VE had a lovely Christmas and another year has begun... it can only mean one thing... your tax return is due!

The deadline for your self-assessment tax return is midnight on Wednesday, January 31. This means you have less than a month to gather all the information you need, navigate the HMRC's online tax-assessment portal, and pay for any tax you owe for 2013-2014.

If you forget or don't do it correctly, you could be facing a £100 fine, even if you don't owe any tax. That's not a good start to the New Year!

Instead, you can call us at Accounted For and our team will handle your tax return quickly and professionally – so you don't have to worry.

Please call us on 02920 498800.

New Year – new start with free courses

THE new year is a good time to think about gaining some new skills and build your confidence for a new start!

The Vale Adult and Community Learning have a range of free courses for anyone who is not currently in education, employment or training, in receipt of benefits or looking to improve their skills for the workplace.

For anyone who is a job seeker or thinking of going back to work, there are drop-in workshops and short courses to help you with using the Internet for job search and applications, creating CVs, interview skills and skills for the workplace.

There are also plenty of computer workshops spread throughout the Vale with the chance to brush up your ICT skills and gain some recognised qualifications.

Courses to help you get that job include workwise retail and customer service, British sign language and lip reading.

Perhaps you are thinking about returning to learning, but are still not sure what you would like to do: a range of First Steps courses is available for confidence and assertiveness, crafts, textiles and sewing machine skills, woodwork and furniture restoration. The courses will give you the opportunity to try new skills, build your confidence and help you decide what you want to do next.

Reading, writing, maths and computers can help you get on in work and life in general. If you want to improve your skills, or don't have any qualifications, then this is the place to start.

You can start at any time and work at your own pace during the day or the evening. There is also a range of English classes (ESOL) for speakers of other languages.

A free crèche is available at some centres. To find out more and book a place on a course, contact Palmerston centre on 01446 733762;

THE HORSE WHO CAME TO LUNCH...

THE Fari Lwyd visited Cowbridge Community College recently for a Welsh-medium lunchtime lecture, accompanied by a group of local men who sang verses at the door in a re-enactment of the old Glamorgan tradition.

Learners enjoyed a soup lunch and an entertaining lecture by Dr Siwan Rosser of Cardiff University, and the horse's Sergeant and men were rewarded with fine cake, and tea in lieu of ale!

This was the second in a series of six lectures to be held in Welsh, provided by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Adult Learning Partnership. The next, on January 16, will be given by Ffion Reynolds, on the topic of Tinkinswood and Llwyneliddon.

For further information, contact Mared Furnham 01446 733762 or mnfurnham@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

Y Ceffyl a Ddaeth i Ginio

CAFODD Mari Lwyd y Bontfaen ddod am dro o'i chartref yn Amgueddfa y Bontfaen yn ddiweddar i ymweld â'r Coleg Cymunedol ar gyfer achlysur Darlith a Chinio.

Daeth nifer o Gymry a dysgwyr Cymraeg i glywed hanes traddodiad y Fari Lwyd wedi'i adrodd yn gelfydd gan Dr Siwan Rosser o Brifysgol Caerdydd, yn yr ail o gyfres o ddarlithoedd cyfrwng Cymraeg a drefnir gan Bartneriaeth Addysg Oedolion Caerdydd a Bro Morgannwg.

Hebryngwyd y Fari gan griw o ddynion lleol a ganodd yr hen bennillion am dâl o 'dishen fras felys' a phaned o de!

Caiff y ddarlith nesaf ei chynnal ar Ionawr 16, a'r darlithydd Ffion Reynolds yn siarad am hanes Tinkinswood a Llwyneliddon.

Am fanylion pellach cysylltwch â Mared Furnham ar 01446 733762 neu mnfurnham@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

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GEM Readers' Letters Extra

Waiting times for operations

I HAVE read Mr Hopkins' recent letter regarding NHS waiting times and I could not agree more. I also read Caroline Scott's letter, which outlined her experience; the way she was treated was shameful to say the least.

I have now, at last, had a reply from Mark Drakeford AM, regarding hip/knee replacement surgery.

He states that 86 per cent of patients in Wales undergo surgery within 26 weeks. He also states that the median waiting time for 50 per cent of patients is up to 15 weeks. However, he uses the word 'treatment', not surgery.

I had a consultation with an orthopaedic surgeon on December 17 regarding a hip replacement. He informed me that the best waiting time he could offer me was 36 weeks at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital.

I have asked Mark Drakeford to let me know how many patients in Wales have had hip/knee replacements in the 26 and 15 week envelopes; also the hospitals where these target times have been achieved.

To start with, the Royal Glamorgan Hospital does not – and judging by Mr Hopkins' experience, the Princess of Wales certainly does not.

He must have this information at hand, otherwise he could not have possibly arrived at the figures he has quoted.

J G Morgan, Pontyclun.

'Princess of Wales staff were excellent'

I HAVE recently been treated at the Princess of Wales hospital in three different departments – audiology, opthalmology and the scan unit.

I cannot fault the treatment I had. The staff were all caring, polite and professional.

I am very slow and elderly, but there was no trying to rush me.

Many thanks to all the staff involved.

Mrs R Guy, Llantwit Major

Coast is 'eyesore'

THE south Vale coast has become an eyesore to behold. Solar farms now clutter up the once beautiful countryside, slurry pits adorn the once unspoiled and protected Heritage Coast and there has been a year of delays due to roadworks under a sewerage pipe.

Let's not have another year of short-term financial gain for the planning people; things are starting to look ugly out there.

(***Name and address supplied***)

Barrier needed to safeguard children

I HAVE been made aware of a possible health and safety situation that could result in a fatality or serious injury to an infant.

On Barry Island, at Amherst Crescent, it would appear thet Vale Council has very kindly decided to refurbish the children's play area in the vicinity of Barry Island Primary School.

Whilst the refurbishment is way above standard and a credit to the local authority, it would seem that certain safety issues have been left as an afterthought. The facility has a safety barrier/fence around the perimeter of this play area.

Its very close proximity to the adjacent roadway can be considered a safety hazard, and I fear it will not be very long before a little child runs off and into the path of a motor car.

I call upon the council to install a safety barrier around this facility to guarantee the safety of children.

Barrie V Evans,
Coordinator, Barry First Group
Barry Voice

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GEM readers' donations will help care for dogs like Gabbi

by GEM REPORTER

GEM readers responded to the Christmas animal rescues appeal with customary generosity.

Joanne Eveleigh, the organiser, said: "I would like to say a huge 'thank you' to everyone who donated items for dog rescues in Wales.

"We have had a great response and would like everyone to know that the items collected are being distributed.

"The blankets, beds, treats, food, leads, collars, coats and other items will be of great help to the 'rescues' this Christmas and New Year as they are full to capacity. I will ensure personally that they are delivered to rescues in Wales."

UK German Shepherd Rescue is just one of the rescues in Wales to benefit. Readers' donations will help the likes of 'Gabbi' – whose full name is Gabriel – who was tied to a tree and abandoned.

Joanne said: "He was left to fend for himself. His hair was matted and had to be shaved off.

"He should be enjoying his life, running round in a loving family home. Instead, he is petrified of the outside world and every step for him outside is a huge achievement.

"He is scared of his own shadow. When he was shaved recently, there were large puncture wounds found in his neck, these are quite deep and nasty.

"He is just one of thousands of dogs that get dumped every day for no reason.

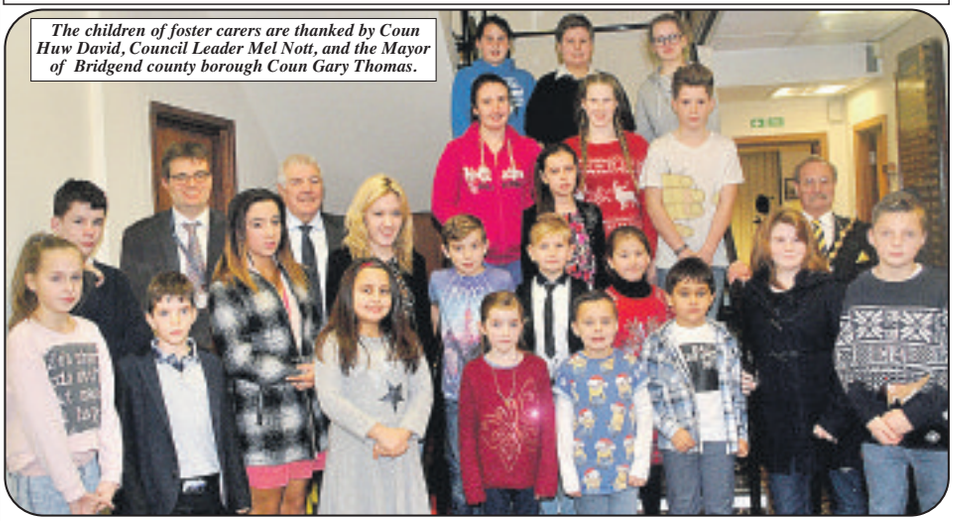
"We will never know the extent of this poor boy's life and injuries, but he needs a home with a loving family."

Particular thanks went to Joanna O'Sullivan of Rhoose and Charlotte Attwell of Barry, who organised major contributions.

For further information on Gabbi, or any other German Shepherd dogs, volunteering/fundraising or fostering/adoptin, contact UK GSR (UK German Shepherd Rescue) www.ukgermanshepherdrescue.co.uk or contact Suzanne on 01925 634699 / 07789 881850.

Gabbi is one of the mistreated animals being helped thanks to readers' generosity.

Children of foster carers take centre stage at presentation



The children of foster carers are thanked by Coun Huw David, Council Leader Mel Nott, and the Mayor of Bridgend county borough Coun Gary Thomas.

THE children of foster carers in Bridgend county borough have been thanked for their contribution to fostering.

A BCBC spokeswoman explained: "Fostering is not just a decision for adults but for the whole family. When a family decides to foster, children have to share their homes, toys, and above all, their parents' time and attention with the looked-after children. In addition they have to deal with sometimes difficult and challenging behaviour.

"However, the majority of children thrive as part of a fostering family and actively contribute by offering support and being a positive role model to fostered children. Sons and daughters help to make foster placements a success."

Their role was recognised at an event hosted by the Mayor of Bridgend county borough at the Civic Offices in Bridgend. The mayor, Coun Gary Thomas, said: "It gave me great pleasure to host this event for the foster carers' birth children as they are often the unsung heroes.

"Fostering is a big change for everyone and affects the whole household so we believe the sons and daughters deserve to be recognised and feel valued for the selfless role they play, which is why a celebratory event was held for them. They truly are a credit to both their families and communities."

The mayor presented the children with a copy of the Dylan's Story leaflet – which the sons and daughters helped to create by drawing on their own experiences – along with a selection box.

The event was also attended by council Leader, Mel Nott and Coun Huw David.

Commissioner's praise for older people's projects

THE Older People's Commissioner for Wales has praised work going on across the Vale to support older people in the area.

Over the past year, the commissioner, Sarah Rochira, and her team have met hundreds of people as part of the commissioner's engagement roadshow, a series of visits to learn about inspirational projects and initiatives.

One of the visits was to the Vale's Senior Health Shop on Holton Road, Barry, which welcomes 300 people every week to its community café, where they are able to take part in activities such as knitting and exercise, receive advice on caring, different illnesses and access to benefits, as well as benefiting from health services such as toe nail cutting.

The initiative is made possible by around 21 volunteers who give a combined total of 80 hours every week and offer a wide variety of information and advice.

Between July and September alone, they helped with 72 enquiries, relating to things like blue badges, cancer, tax, home adaptations and residential care.

TRANSFORMATION

On other visits, the commissioner's team found out about projects aimed at getting older people online. Communities First Barry hold classes in the town three times a week and have helped over a hundred people, some of them older people, who are learning how to order shopping or take part in internet forum discussions about their favourite football teams.

The commissioner's team also visited Oak Court on Myrtle Road, Penarth, where social landlord Wales and West Housing helps tenants to enhance and maintain the grounds.

A group of residents began the transformation by clearing the overgrown garden and cutting the lawn, before adding flower beds and growing produce, such as runner beans and tomatoes, in a greenhouse they erected.

The residents have now extended a patio area and their work has helped create a wonderful social area that older people can enjoy.

REGULAR VISITORS

The commissioner's team are also regular visitors to meetings of the Penarth Ageing Well Club, which is a prominent local voice and meets weekly to discuss issues affecting older people from the area.

Sarah Rochira said: "My team and I have spent a lot of time in the Vale over the last year and have been incredibly impressed with much of the work happening to make the area a better place to grow older.

"As well as many organisations and forums that are empowering older people to get involved in the decision-making process, there are many charities and voluntary groups offering support ranging from emotional to help getting online or starting new activities."

Young Farmers Club members sharpen up their verbal skills!

Junior reading team: Oliver Popham, Evan Thomas, Keira Atyeo-Canter.

MAENDY Young Farmers Club members worked hard in rehearsal for the Glamorgan YFC public speaking competitions, and it certainly paid off.

The first competition on December 7 at Pendoylan Primary School, proved a successful day for the club.

The junior reading team, made up of under-14 members Evan Thomas, Oliver Popham and Keira Atyeo-Canter, took first place. Evan and Oliver were also selected for the county team.

Two junior public speaking teams represented the club. The winning team consisted of Emma Popham, Lauren David and Ellie Howes, while the second team were placed a very commendable fourth.

Club chairman, Heather Jarvis and vice chairman Kate Thomas competed in the 'senior member of the year' event, achieving fifth and 10th place respectively.

The last competition of the day was intermediate brainstrust, a panel discussion where members debate three topics of recent news against the clock. The team consisted of Jack Clothier as chairman with Rob David, Mathew Davies and George Thomas as panellists. The team was placed third on the day, with George Thomas selected for the county team.

The second competition day took place on December 14 at Neath Conservative Club. The five-strong senior after-dinner speaking team took first place in the competition, and team members Heather Jarvis, Ieuan Rosser and Tom Rees were selected for the county team at the Wales YFC competition in March.

Members also took part in the 'call my bluff' competition, with one of the teams finishing in joint third place.

A big thank you goes to all club trainers – Hannah Lewis, Becky Harry, Natalie Lewis and club president Richard Western for all their hard work and guidance.

The focus then turned to the festive season. Members enjoyed a Christmas jumper-themed meal at The Red Fox, Penllyn, on December 8.

For further information visit www.maendy-yfc.com or email maendy.yfc@gmail.com.

School's Santa appeal is a hit

I WOULD like to let GEM readers know about the very successful festive fundraising efforts of students at Brynteg Comprehensive School.

This year's Santa appeal raised £4,778.14, and it enabled the school to buy Christmas presents for 200 children in the county borough.

A donation was also made to the Women's Refuge of £275.

The school wishes to thank Apsee's Removal Company for their continued support in picking up and delivering the Santa sacks.

On Friday, December 12, Brynteg staff donned their Christmas sweaters for 'National Christmas Jumper Day' and raised a further £148, which was sent to the Save the Children Fund.

PAM DOSTER, Brynteg School.

'Beware rogue traders', county council warns

RESIDENTS of Bridgend county borough are urged to be wary of rogue traders who may view this as an ideal time to dupe vulnerable homeowners.

BCBC has warned that at this time of year, cold callers often turn up uninvited at people's homes to offer attractive packages, such as heating deals or cheap insulation.

Residents are being urged to turn cold callers away if they have not made an appointment, or seem to be using pressure tactics to sell goods or services.

The Leader of Bridgend County Borough Council, Coun Mel Nott, said: "The majority of doorstep callers are genuine, but unfortunately there are also some unscrupulous individuals out there and it is important for residents to be on their guard."

To report incidents of rogue trading, call South Wales Police on 101 or Citizens' Advice Consumer Service on 03454 04 05 06.

For more information on how Bridgend County Borough Council's Trading Standards Service can help businesses, call 01656 643478 or email tradingstandards@bridgend.gov.uk.

Rain fails to deter the Boxing Day crowds

PHOTOGRAPHS by **GLYN EVANS**

OTHER PICTURES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THIS EVENT.

Pictures can be purchased by contacting:

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Telephone 07791 228684
www.ffotoimage.co.uk

THE Glamorgan Hunt drew huge crowds to Cowbridge on Boxing Day, despite heavy rain.

As can be seen from Glyn Evans' pictorial record of the day, there were some young festive riders in attendance too.

Cancer patients are thanked

MACMILLAN Cancer Support in Wales would like to thank all of those cancer patients who took the time to respond to the Wales cancer patients' experience survey and enabled us to capture the voice of the patient.

This is the first time in the UK that detailed analysis of comments made by cancer patients about their treatment and care has been conducted.

It provides us with a powerful insight and richer understanding of the patient experience of cancer care in Wales.

Cancer patients had concerns around initial identification of symptoms, staff shortages and the provision of too little information and support.

But there were also high levels of satisfaction expressed around surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy and praise for specialist nurses.

Macmillan has responded to the results of this cancer patients' experience survey by calling on the Welsh Government to ensure the promises made in its Cancer Delivery Plan for Wales are fully implemented.

Cancer is the toughest fight most of us will ever face – but you don't have to go through it alone – the Macmillan team is here for you every step of the way.

So call us free on 0808 808 0000 or visit macmillan.org.uk

SUSAN MORRIS
(*General Manager for Wales, Macmillan Cancer Support*)

BCBC 'considers its options' after court quashes school closure

VILLAGERS in Llangeinor have had their best ever Christmas present – news that the High Court has quashed the decision taken by Bridgend county borough council to close their village school.

Campaigners battling to retain Tynyrheol Primary School took their fight to the High Court, calling for a judicial review of the decision. They won the argument with the court ruling that BCBC's decision taken last April to close Tynyrheol and move pupils to a new school at Betws, which would also replace Betws Primary School, should be quashed. However, the council has the right to appeal.

Welsh Conservative Regional AMs Byron Davies and Suzy Davies, who both met campaigners and backed the fight, have welcomed this decision.

Byron Davies said: "The council acted in a very high handed and arrogant way towards villagers. There was an assumption on the part of the council that the decision was cut and dried and they paid very little heed at all to what people were saying.

"The council also failed to consult with the regional AMs for the area, including myself and Suzy Davies, despite the fact that we have a statutory right to be consulted. We were all elected – not just the constituency AM for Ogmore.

"As the Welsh Assembly has now been in existence for 15 years, it's inexcusable for officers to claim they did not know we should be consulted. The judge was very scathing in his comments about this failure on the part of the council.

"There are people all over Bridgend complaining about the way the council handles consultations, claiming that it tries to bulldoze its decisions through. So, well done to the people of Llangeinor for standing in the path of this bulldozer and throwing a spanner into its works."

Suzy Davies said: "BCBC failed to follow proper procedures when it took the decision to close this school. Its consultation procedures were fatally flawed and it failed to provide the substantive evidence it needed to justify closing down Tynyrheol.

"The council must urgently review all its consultation processes as failure to adhere to the Schools Code laid down by Welsh Government could cost the council taxpayers dearly because the council has been ordered to foot the bill for these proceedings.

"My warmest congratulations to the campaigners whose determination to see fair play had illuminated the council's slovenly approach to such an important matter."

A spokesperson for BCBCsaid this week: *"Bridgend county borough council was the first local authority to attempt to undertake a school closure under the Welsh Government's new school organisational code.*

"The outcome has provided clarity over a number of issues and we will be applying the knowledge gained from this process as we consider our options in light of the decision.

Valeways honour their 'passionate' volunteer

Alan's plaque is fixed to the stile.

VALEWAYS volunteers and members of Alan Wilson's family met recently to dedicate a stile with a brass plaque, at St Mary Church, to mark the contribution that Alan's volunteering has made to the Vale countryside.

The charity Valeways was formed in 1996 and shortly afterwards Alan became a volunteer. In the early days it was nearly all physical work clearing public rights of way which had been sadly neglected over the years, but from there the charity progressed to designing circular walks and producing high quality walk leaflets with route instructions and places of interest en route.

Alan was a major contributor especially with the church, college and lighthouse in the Llantwit Major area, the Six Village Walk around Cowbridge, Castle-upon-Alun and Ogmore routes and the Valeways Millennium Heritage Trail which is now a UK national trail.

A trustee for many years and a walk leader for 12 years, he opened up the Vale countryside to explore many unknown trails for a whole new generation of walkers. Alan was not well enough to attend the ceremony, but I am sure he will be delighted that Valeways volunteering has managed to survive these difficult financial times.

There must be more 'Alans' out there who would like to do their bit to preserve the Vale's wonderful footpath network, whatever theirinterest and ability. Please contact Rebecca, our volunteer co-ordinator, at : Rebecca@valeways.org.uk or call the Valeways office on 01446 749000 from Monday, January 5.

Happy New Year to all Valeways volunteers and walkers; may you all continue to enjoy the Vale countryside and coast.

VAL WARLOW

HEAVY RAIN FAILS TO DAMPEN SPIRITS AS LOCAL HUNT MEETS IN COWBRIDGE

The pictures on this page were taken by MIKE WILCOCK.
They are available to order from wilcock60@aol.com or telephone 01446 774502.

COWBRIDGE was a sea of activity and colour on Boxing Day when the Glamorgan Hunt had its traditional gathering.

As you can see from Mike Wilcock's pictorial record of the occasion despite the teeming rain, the riders, horses, hounds and spectators all turned up, making the day a real spectacle.

Linda has stars in her eyes!

A SLIMMING group leader from Peterston Super Ely, Linda Bowen, is pictured with TV celebrity Peter Andre who co-hosted the Slimming World Awards with the organisation's chair and founder Margaret Miles-Bramwell.

"I'm so proud of all of our members. They've lost fantastic amounts of weight throughout 2014, with many of them reaching their target weights and improving their health substantially," Linda told him.

Local language student takes top Welsh prize

RIGHT: Mrs Anne Weedon with Madeleine Williamson-Sarll.

A PORTHCAWL Comprehensive pupil has been honoured in the recent WJEC achievement awards, which took place at the exam board's head office in Cardiff.

Madeleine Williamson-Sarll, who gained five A grades at AS level and three A* and one A at A-level, received the award for the best A-level results in Welsh second language in the UK.

A gifted linguist, raised in a German-English speaking environment, Madeleine studied German, Welsh, English and French for A-level, having also studied Religious Education to AS level.

Madeleine is a passionate advocate for the Welsh language and all language learning, with her dedication being rewarded not just with her outstanding results, but with the coveted Chair in the 2014 School Eisteddfod, for her poem '*Pobl Ifanc Yng Nghymru*'.

She recently worked for a few months in Austria as part of her gap year and intends reading German at university next autumn. Madeleine is considering working in Patagonia in the New Year, with the aim of y teaching it to youngsters in one of the Welsh schools there.

She also hopes to start tackling Spanish, adding a fourth foreign language to her repertoire.

One of Madeleine's Welsh teachers, Mrs Anne Weedon, accompanied her to the prestigious award ceremony. She said: "Congratulations to Madeleine on achieving the WJEC award for the highest mark in A-Level Welsh (Second Language) in the UK.

"She gained 593/600 UMS marks, which included full marks in three modules. This was a fantastic achievement and it was a pleasure to join her at the awards ceremony. She is an incredibly clever and hardworking student and deserves this recognition. *Llongyfarchiadau a phob lwc am y dyfodol*."

Madeleine was one of 75 students honoured across the UK. She said: "I am extremely proud of this achievement and would like to thank my Welsh teachers for their support and encouragement. I hope to continue with my Welsh studies in the future and to build on this success."

Porthcawl Comprehensive headteacher Mr Andrew Slade also congratulated Madeleine personally: "This is a truly outstanding achievement and we are very proud of the honour you have brought to yourself, the school and the community.

"All of your examination marks during your time at Porthcawl Comprehensive School were first class.

"Gaining the top mark in Welsh is a reflection of your fantastic aptitude for languages, as well as your hard work and determination.

"I wish you every success with your chosen career. Well done, Madeleine!"

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'Please open your home to needy'

RESIDENTS are being urged to open their homes to adults with additional needs by the Vale Council's adult placement team, which supports those with learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities and mental health problems.

Contact www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or 01446 731105 for further details.

COLD SNAP!

THIS snap of a cow and her calf was captured at Three Fields, Cowbridge, the morning after a heavy frost on Monday, by GEM reader Gareth Richards.

Infants school wins an award

Dinas Powys Infants School has become the 29th school in Wales to win the NACE Challenge Award for more able and talented pupils.

It is given for high quality work by the school in challenging all pupils, particularly those more able and talented, to achieve their potential.

NACE chief executive, Rowena Gaston, said: "Dinas Powys Infants School has worked hard to win the NACE Challenge Award status. It has shown itself to be committed to developing a school where all pupils are challenged to be the best they can be.

"The more able and talented children are challenged and this helps the other learners to see what can be achieved."

Assessors for NACE (the National Association for Able Children in Education) spent a day at the school observing lessons.

FLY-TIPPING CAMPAIGN

THE Vale Council enforcement and compliance team has taken to the streets – to highlight the problem of fly-tipping and litter.

Coun Rob Curtis, senior enforcement officer Denny White, and officers from the cleansing team distributed leaflets (above) to residents and businesses along High Street, Barry, encouraging them to report incidents.

Free compost

FROM January 2015, Vale residents will once again be able to collect free compost.

Cowbridge Compost, the company that deals with the Vale's food and green garden waste, will deliver a supply every month to the Court Road Depot in Barry.

Residents will be able to collect compost between the hours of 10am and 2pm on the last Sunday of the month, with the exception of December.

Coun Rob Curtis, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "I am pleased to see an important and much-missed service reinstated by the council."

The existing free wood chipping collection will still run as normal on the last Sunday of the month.

John Homfray of Cowbridge Compost said: "We are delighted to be working in partnership with the council in reinstating this popular and environmentally friendly service to the residents of the Vale."

Residents are advised, when collecting the compost, to bring a shovel, a suitable container, protective gloves and suitable footwear.

Missing cat returns after seven years

(thanks to microchip)

A ginger cat who went missing for seven years is back home in time for the New Year, thanks to a microchip and the Cats Protection's Bridgend Adoption Centre.

Sheer bliss! Julie and Garfield are reunited after seven long years. PHOTOGRAPH BY SUE DOBBS

Nine-year-old cat Garfield has been reunited with his owner, Julie Calder, after disappearing from her home while out on a prowl seven long years ago.

In December 2012, Garfield turned up at a house in the same area as his original home. Mistaking him for a stray, a lady looked after him for two years before bringing him to Cats Protection's Bridgend Adoption Centre when she could no longer care for him.

The centre scanned Garfield for a chip and, though it showed up an old address, the centre did a bit of extra detective work and managed to track down Julie, who had since moved house.

Julie came to collect Garfield on Tuesday, (December 30), in an emotional reunion.

She said: "I am over the moon to have Garfield back home after seven years. I never stopped thinking about him and wondering where he was.

"He is going to be very spoilt now!"

Having been very grumpy during his time with Cats Protection, Garfield visibly relaxed as soon as he saw his owner.

Sue Dobbs, the manager of the Bridgend Adoption Centre, said: "Julie just picked him up, something we haven't been able to do, and he proceeded to lick her face. Apparently he used to do this before he went missing. It was lovely to see.

"It's a great feeling to reunite Garfield and Julie, especially at this time of year. Thousands of cats go missing every year and, sadly, almost one in two never return, so we're grateful that in this case at least there's been a happy ending.

"If you own a pet cat that isn't already 'chipped' then now is the perfect time to make a New Year's resolution and talk to your vet about the procedure.

"Microchipping cats, and keeping the contact details up to date, significantly increase the chances of happy reunion if those cats should ever go missing. And if you are feeding a stray too, then consider ringing a local animal charity or a vet to see if a scan may reveal a microchip."

Microchips contain a unique identification number and are inserted under the cat's skin between the shoulder blades. The number is linked to a database containing details of the pet, as well as the owner's contact details. When a scanner detects the microchip, a simple phone call can ascertain the owner's details and the pet can then be quickly returned home.

Cats Protection's Bridgend Adoption Centre is part of a national network of more than 250 volunteer-run branches and 31 adoption centres that together help over 194,000 cats and kittens every year. For more information about the charity, please log on to www.cats.org.uk

For further information, contact bridgend.manager@cats.org.uk or Sue Dobbs on 01656 726621.

Valeways walks should keep you active in 2015!

THE evenings may have closed in and the temperatures may have dropped, but Valeways Volunteers still lead walks 52 weeks a year throughout the Vale.

So why not come and join us? The majority of the walks are just 90 minutes long and give you the opportunity to discover other areas of the Vale. A New Year's Day Walk with Dave starts at 1pm outside St Peter's Church, Mill Road, Dinas Powys, and on Sunday, January 4, meet Phil by Barry Island Railway Station at 2.30pm for the 'Island in Winter'.

Ruth's bilingual Walk 'Hoffi Coffi' meets outside the Coffee Cove Café on Barry Island at 10am on January 6.

The more active can join our longer walks and explore new areas of the Vale footpath network. The next one is on January 29 meeting at 10am at the Sportsman's Rest, Peterston Super Ely for a seven-mile 'Fore' with John.

The Coffee Shop Strollers walks take place every Wednesday 10.30am, alternating between the Knap in Barry (meet outside Romilly's café and Cosmeston Country Park (Visitors Centre).

The next Stroll will take place on January 7 at Cosmeston.

Winter programme details can be found on the Valeways website –www.valeways.org.uk or by emailing info@valeways.org.uk

Val Warlow

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VALE SHOW SOCIETY PRESENTS TROPHIES AT ANNUAL DINNER

Pictures by **HEATHER MARCH**

Tony and Edward Thomas, Pancross, receive the Victor Ludorum.

ABOVE: President Martyn Popham presents the Homfray Perpetual trophy for Silage to Jock Anstey of Tyfry.

The James Trophy went to Julian Radcliffe of Penmark.

The Robert Thomas Cup for most points in combinable crop section went to Richard Anthony of Tythegston.

Pam Harris (left) thanks Nicola Gibson for 16 years of hard work.

Stalwarts of the show committee over many years, seated from left: John Arnott and Mary Thomas; standing from left, Sarah Fenner (the new secretary) Pam Harris and Nicola Gibson.

THE Bear Hotel, Cowbridge, was the venue for the Vale of Glamorgan Agricultural Society's annual dinner and field class prizegiving.

Mrs Elizabeth Synan, chairman of the society, announced the prizewinners for 2014 field classes and president Martyn Popham presented the trophies. The evening also included the presentation of a gift to Mrs Nicola Gibson, to mark her retirement as general secretary after 16 years of dedicated service to the society.

The following prizes were awarded: **The Williams and Glyn Cup** for group of eight calf Holstein heifers judged on the farm – winner: Clive Thomas, Dros-y-Mor Farm, St Donats.

The Major Frank Homfray Perpetual Challenge Cup for the best clamp of silage – winner: O Anstey & Son, Ty Fry, Pendoylan.

The Fred Williams Memorial Cup for the best bag of silage – winner: RL Anthony & Son, Tythegston Farm, Bridgend.

The George Gibson Challenge Cup for the best long term Ley – three or more seasons – winner: E & H Radcliffe & Son, Penmark Place Farm, Penmark.

The Penllyne Cricket Club Perpetual Challenge Cup for the best short term Ley –1 or 2 seasons (to include Italian Rye Grass) – winner: RL Anthony & Son, Tythegston Farm, Bridgend.

The Evan Crook Memorial Cup for the best field of winter barley – winner: G Anthony & Son, Haregrove Farm, Laleston.

The Vale Show Perpetual Challenge Cup for the best Field of Spring Barley – winner: T Rees & Son, Upper Parc Farm, Laleston.

The James James JP memorial Challenge Trophy for the best field of winter oats – winner: E & H Radcliffe & Son, Penmark Place Farm, Penmark.

The WD James Memorial Perpetual Challenge Trophy for the best field of winter wheat – winner: VJ Thomas & Son, Pancross Farm, Llancarfan.

The Gwyn Jervis Perpetual Challenge Cup for the best winter oilseed crop – winner: RL Anthony & Son, Tythegston Farm, Bridgend.

The AR Thomas Contractor Perpetual Challenge Cup for the best field of maize – winner: RL Anthony & Son, Tythegston Farm, Bridgend.

The Robert Thomas Memorial Perpetual Challenge Cup for the competitor receiving the highest number of points in the combinable corn section – winner: RL Anthony & Son, Tythegston Farm, Bridgend.

The Llancarfan Ploughing Match Perpetual Challenge Cup for the competitor receiving the highest number of points in the root section – winner: Robert Thomas, Ruthin Farm, St Mary Hill.

The Victor Ludorum Trophy. The Vivian Thomas Memorial Perpetual Challenge Trophy for the Glamorgan Farmer winning the highest number of points in the Agricultural Section – winner: VJ Thomas & Son, Pancross Farm, Llancarfan.

The society is looking forward to hosting the 2015 Vale Show on August 12 in Fonmon Castle.

For further information, details of sponsorship opportunities and for trade stand information, please log on to www.valeofglamorganshow.co.uk email vale.show@outlook.com or telephone 07513 141 698 to contact Sarah Fenner, general secretary.

Vale Council signs the White Ribbon pledge

Signing the White Ribbon pledge.

THE Vale Council, along with domestic abuse support service, Atal y Fro, has launched its White Ribbon Campaign at an event in the Civic Offices.

Council members, including Leader Neil Moore and council officers signed the White Ribbon Campaign pledge, which promises "never to commit, condone, or remain silent about men's violence against women in all its forms."

The White Ribbon town award was presented to the Vale Council at the Senedd in Cardiff on September 30, recognising the council's continued commitment to the aims of the campaign.

Grant scheme helps young entrepreneurs

WHILE TV's *The Apprentice* has been gripping the nation, five entrepreneurs have set up new businesses in the Vale – thanks to a bursary scheme led by Creative Rural Communities (CRC).

The new businesses range from an online store selling 'steam punk' inspired accessories to a freelance sound recording service for TV and film production companies.

A beauty salon, a bi-lingual childminding service and a new clothing company have also been supported through 'Inspiring the Vale' bursaries.

CRC, the Vale Council's rural regeneration initiative, has encouraged young entrepreneurs in the Vale to apply for grants up to £3,000 to launch their own business.

Helmanas Lik, who has launched online steam punk accessory store Noble Lion, said: "Thanks to the 'Inspiring the Vale' bursary, I will finally be able to turn my hobby into a profitable business.

"It would have taken me a few years to save up enough money for a successful business start but thanks to the Creative Rural Communities, I have the opportunity to make it happen now."

This is the second time the scheme project has been run by CRC. Between 2008 and 2011, 23 new businesses were supported – from barbers to photographers, and from caterers to those specialising in renewable energy.

"It is so encouraging to see new businesses being created across the Vale," said Coun Lis Burnett, cabinet member for regeneration, innovation, planning and transportation.

"This scheme encourages innovation from our young entrepreneurs. The team at Creative Rural Communities provide the support and encouragement they need to make their dream a reality, and we hope we see many more success stories in 2015."

To find out more about Inspire the Vale bursaries and Creative Rural Communities, visit www.creativeruralcommunities.co.uk.

KPC says 'thank you for a memorable year'

KPC in Pyle would like to extend their thanks once again this year to everyone who has supported the charity during 2014.

Again we have had a busy and exciting year, with new projects starting and the change from being KPC Youth, to being KPC Youth & Community.

This has followed on from recent work we have begun to do, not just with young people, but with their parents and the wider community in which we live, particularly those who are unemployed.

Thanks as always go to everyone who has supported us in some way – be it through supporting our collection boxes, buying raffles, donating clothes, toners, stamps, inks etc, or supporting events, and also those who have undertaken sponsored events for us.

We also thank all our regular monthly supporters and organisations, such as Porthcawl Lions, who undertake local fundraising events of their own to help charities such as ours.

We also thank everyone who has made donations or gifts in time to us throughout the year – a big thanks to all who believe in the work we do, and help us achieve our aims.

2014 has seen KPC needing to review its staffing structure, in order that we can ensure our future. As part of this, a new evening timetable of opening will be introduced in the New Year, and also a trial after-school club for ages 5-plus on one evening per week.

Following on from our Buy a Brick Appeal, we have now secured funding from South East Wales Community Economic Development Fund and BAVO Social Enterprise Grant Scheme for professional fees so that architects' plans can be drawn up and full planning submitted for our proposed two-storey development, to replace the existing portakabin.

This is an exciting time for us, and one we have worked towards for several years. We will still need to secure major capital funding towards this, but have been invited to put in full applications for this.

If you live locally and want to find out more on what KPC can offer, please contact us, or drop in. We are currently running regular accredited training for unemployed, as well as one to one support with IT/CV skills and help with job applications etc.

Other new pilots we have recently started are 'cuppa & craft' sessions for anyone 16-plus on a Thursday afternoon - again these are open to any members of the community.

New for January we will also have the Citizens' Advice Bureau here on a Thursday afternoon, twice a month from 1pm to 3pm.

These sessions will be by appointment only, so please contact the centre if you would like some help, guidance or advice on dealing with debt, managing a budget, and benefit entitlements.

If you are interested in finding out more about anything mentioned above, please contact Alison on 01656 749219, kpcyouth@hotmail.com.

Alison Mawby (Project development manager)

Swimmers flock to the beach for seaside town's morning fundraising extravaganza

PORTHCAWL'S Christmas Morning Swim has gone from strength to strength in recent years, with its twin aims of providing a fun, social start to the big day, and of fundraising for local good causes.

This year, more than 1,500 swimmers dived in!

(See more pictures on page 32).

PHOTOGRAPHS by **GLYN EVANS**

OTHER PICTURES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THIS EVENT.

Pictures can be purchased by contacting:

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From Whitewell Drive area. Black and White, three year old male cat named 'Oscar'. Oscar has periodically wandered for 3-5 days at a time but has now been missing for a month.

Small reward for recovery.

Tel 07917 366208

Thank You

Lilian and Bryan James send many thanks to everyone who kindly sent us such beautiful cards on the occasion of our Diamond Wedding Anniversary.

Special thanks must go to our son Nigel and his wife Sue who made the day so special and for arranging for a special greeting to us from the Queen.

Thank you, once again, and a Happy New Year to you all.

Wedding Anniversary

Golden Wedding

Les & Ann Thomas

Celebrating 50 years of marriage on 2nd January

Many congratulations on your Golden Wedding Anniversary

with love, Catherine, Rhiannon and Hayley x

Public Notice

LICENSING ACT 2003
Section 17 (5)
Notice of Application for a Premises Licence
NOTICE IS GIVEN THAT

An application has been made to Bridgend County Borough Council (the Licensing Authority) for a

PREMISES LICENCE.

To permit licensable activities which it is proposed will be carried on, on or from the premises shown below. Details of the application may be inspected between the hours of : Monday to Thursday 0830 to 1700 hours and Friday 0830 to 1630 hours at Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB or by visiting the authority's website: www.bridgend.gov.uk. Any responsible authority or any other person may make representations in respect of the application, which must be submitted, in writing, to the following address before the date shown below:- Licensing Section, Bridgend County Borough Council, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB.

Name of applicant: Mr Zahid Rasul/Mrs Saima Rasul

Name and postal address of the premises: 33 Market Street Bridgend CF31 1LJ

Statement of intended licensable activities: (1) Plays, films, indoor sporting event, live music, boxing or wrestling entertainment, record music, supply of alcohol, performance of dance, rugby or football match from 11.30am till 2.30am. Refreshments 11.30am till 11.00pm

Date by which representations must be made: 17th January 2015.

This notice remains in force from and including the day after the giving of this notice to the licensing authority, namely Bridgend CBC on 22/12/14 for 28 consecutive days. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. The maximum fine on summary conviction is £5,000.

Family Notices

THOMAS
Tudor Vivian

Peacefully on December 20, Tudor, formerly of Preston and Thomas, husband of Jeanne and father of Catherine and David, father-in-law of Ian and Rebecca, grandfather of Thomas and Emily.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W James & Sons, Fonmon. Funeral Friday January 9, service and cremation 12 noon at Coychurch Crematorium, Bridgend. No flowers by request, donations in lieu, if desired, to Dr. Barnados c/o J James, 11 Fonmon Road, Rhoose, Vale of Glamorgan CF62 3DZ.

CAULFIELD
Gary

Peacefully on the 17th December at home, Gary aged 58 of Barry. Loved brother to Eileen and dear uncle to Lisa, will be sadly missed by all his family and friends.

Resting at Park Funeral Directors, 7 Tynewydd Road, Barry until the service on Thursday, 8th January, 1pm at Cardiff and Glamorgan Crematorium Port Road Barry. Funeral arrangements by Robert Johnson.

WATTS
Valerie

Peacefully on December 16 at UHW Cardiff, Valerie, formerly of Llantrithyd, dearly loved mother of Gillian and Helen, dear mother-in-law of Ronnie and Cyril, much loved by Carol, Huw, Hannah and George, Michelle, Tim, Megan and Alex, Howard, Sarah, Cameron, Kaelan, Kaine, and Emma.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W James & Sons, Fonmon. Funeral Tuesday January 6, service and interment 2pm at Llantrithyd Church. Family flowers only may be sent to the funeral home, donations in lieu, if desired, to Llantrithyd Church Restoration Fund c/o J James, 11 Fonmon Road, Rhoose, Vale of Glamorgan CF62 3DZ.

LOWELL
Kathryn Elizabeth

Peacefully after a short illness at Llandough Hospital, beloved daughter of the late Bill and Patricia Lowell, sister of Kerry and Jonathan and niece of Cynthia Booker and Brian Toomey.

Funeral service to be held at Cardiff and Glamorgan Crematorium, Port Road, Barry on Wednesday, 7th January at 2pm.

No flowers please, donations to Cancer Research. Resting at Park Independent Funeral Directors, 7 Tynewydd Road, Barry. Funeral arrangements by Robert Johnson.

SMITH
John

Sandy and family wish to thank everyone for their help and support, for the overwhelming number of cards and letters with messages of sympathy on their sad loss and for the donations given to The British Heart Foundation in John's memory.

HAMMETT
David Roger

Peacefully on December 17, at College Fields N.H. Barry, David of St. Athan, dearly loved brother of Valerie and brother-in-law David, much loved uncle of Chris, Gavin and Sarah.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W James & Sons, Fonmon. Funeral Monday January 5, service and cremation 2.00pm at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry. No flowers by request.

GRIFFIN
Germaine

Sadly on Saturday 20 December 2014, Germaine of Llantwit Major. Dearly loved wife of Tom, loving mother to Angela and a much loved grand mother to Emma and Simon and greatgrandmother to Isabelle. She will be sadly missed by her family and friends.

Resting at W.A. Brown & Son, College Street, Llantwit Major 01446 792489 until the funeral service on Tuesday, 6th January 2015 in Coychurch Crematorium at 3.45pm.

DOWDALL
Vincent Arthur

Peacefully on the 16th December, at Princess of Wales Hospital, Vincent of Ham Manor. Beloved husband of Marie, much loved father of Fleur and Krista and a dear grandfather and father-in-law.

Resting at William James & Sons, Fonmon, until the Funeral on Friday, 2nd January at 2pm at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry.

Family flowers only please, donations in lieu to Wales Air Ambulance c/o J James, 11 Fonmon Road, Rhoose CF62 3DZ.

"So deep is the night, the lonely night,
On broken wings my heart has taken flight."
Rest my darling, till we meet again.
Your broken hearted wife, Marie. X

FORSTER-HICKS
Jennifer

(nee Forster & formerly Jennifer Gimber)

Sadly passed away on 14th December 2014 due to ongoing health complications. Sadly missed by daughter Rhiann and partner Bryan.

Public funeral to be held Friday, 2nd January 2015 at 11.45am at the Wenallt Chapel, Thornhill Crematorium. Flowers to Pidgeons Funeral Directors, Cowbridge Road East, Canton or small donations can be made instead to the Eye Unit at Queen Victoria Hospital, care of secretary Kathy Gibby - telephone 01342 414000 ext 4560.

TAYLOR
Gerald David

Gerald, loving husband of Carole and devoted dad of Bridget and Cammelia, father-in-law of Michael and Steve and loving gramp of Rebecca, Jessica, David and Ashleigh, sadly passed away on 20th December, 2014.

In accordance with his wishes, a private service for close family members will be held in due course, the family would like to thank all medical staff involved in his care.

Birthday Memories

Brenda Owens

Special Memories for 4th January

Always remembered with love.

Shirley & Family xx

Do you have something to celebrate?

BIRTH, BIRTHDAY, ANNIVERSARY ETC

Now only **£10 plus vat** *for a 5cm x 6cm colour greeting including a photo.*

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Happy Birthday

Sarah Smith

on 1st January

Photo

Love from Mum, Dad & family *xxx*

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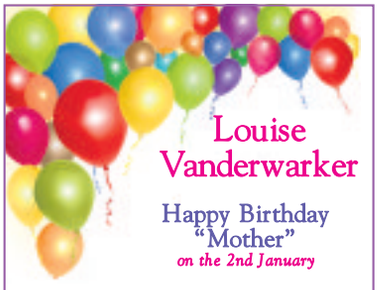
Birthday Notices



Louise Vanderwarker

Happy Birthday "Mother"

on the 2nd January

You're the best mum in the world

Love you everything Jacques xxxx

CATHY WATKINS

Happy 40th Birthday

on 2nd January 2015

Cathy have a fantastic birthday. You are such a caring mum, daughter, sister, sister-in-law and auntie. We all love you loads.

Chloe, Sam, Josh, Jake, Matty, Mum & Dad, Helen, Rob, Sian, Grant, Stephi, Tasha and Lucy xxxx

New Year Messages

Sue & Rob Thomas

of Llantwit Major wish all our dear friends and relations a Healthy and Happy 2015 xxx

This year we will be donating to our favourite charity in lieu of cards.

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IT'S A CRISP CHRISTMAS MORNING IN PORTHCAWL SO 'SEND IN THE CLOWNS'

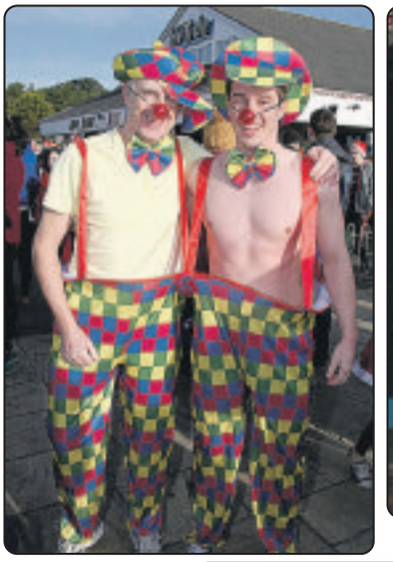
PHOTOGRAPHS by MALCOLM NUGENT

ORGANISERS asked swimmers to dress as clowns or Vikings for this year's Porthcawl Christmas swim – and quite a few did!

Altogether, 1,500 swimmers braved the cold waters, with many raising funds for local charities.

ABOVE: Clowns, clowns, everywhere, and these bear a disturbing resemblance to Stephen King's Pennywise!

'It's so cold!'



Baywatch comes to Porthcawl!

Mike and Rick's brand new books are reviewed...

***THE Mike Hall Story* is one of the most fascinating books about Welsh sport.**

For the first time, the full true story behind two of the biggest changes in Welsh rugby and football is told.

Mike Hall reveals new details about how Cardiff City Stadium was built, the controversial role of former owner Sam Hammam, and how close to failure the project was on many occasions.

Hall is also a former captain of Cardiff and Wales, so there are many new stories from the world of rugby – including how close Wales came to being the base for the Packer-circus style pair of professional rugby franchises in Cardiff and Swansea, rather than the current regional system.

The book gives great insight into the transition from the amateur to the professional era in Welsh rugby, with stories about the controversy of that period.

The book also follows Mike at some of his fundraising events, and shows the great work he and other rugby stars have done to raise money for Velindre Cancer Centre.

"I have been involved in some big stories in Welsh sport and this is the chance to set the record straight," said Hall.

"I am delighted proceeds from the book will help the cancer care at Velindre Hospital – a thoroughly worthy cause."

Mike, who gives his unique verdict on the current state of play in Welsh football and rugby, and about which of the two can lay claim to being the national sport of Wales, with some surprising answers.

The Mike Hall Story is published by Y Lolfa at £9.95.

RICK O'SHEA was born in Wales, raised in England and is of Irish ancestry – three countries he wasn't good enough to play for!

However, this very ordinary player tells an extraordinary story in his book *Rick O' Shea – It's All Rugby* (published by Y Lolfa at £9.95).

In an unusual, colourful and humorous story, we visit Cornwall where Rick grew up; Australia, where his father lives; and go back and forth to Wales, and many points in between.

The journey, like this book, is what you might imagine, plus a whole lot more.

As Nigel Owens said: "It's not often that we come across real characters in sport these days, but Rick O'Shea is one of them. He has the skill to make things fun to watch and is also very knowledgeable.

"Rick is one of the genuine guys who has time for everyone and is always a pleasure to work with."

Some 207 pages, with 14 pages of illustrations, this book reveals how Rick has been haunted by fears of perennial underachievement both on and off the pitch, until that is, he became a father and qualified as a doctor in his 40s.

For the first time, he began to realise the 'big match potential' an old headmaster had spotted.

BRIAN LEE

Barry & District Ladies' skittle league

First Division: Allsorts (R Dawe 29) 272, Colcot Lds (A Singleton 27) 277; Coppers (J Hartnell 37) 352, Red Admiral (S Hayes 31) 330; SV Gals (J Richards 32) 296, Space Finders (M Clark 27) 253; Barry Stars (W Phillips 39) 333, Cigar Lds (L Webb 30) 301; Pila Palas (spotter A Williams 31) 314, Family Friends (C Mathews 34) 314.

Second Division: Strikers (B Page 31) 245, Vixens (H Jones 23) 198; Roller Coasters (J Marriott 27) 242, Bobby's Girls (A Seldon 27) 221; Witchill Widows (Adoel Davis 32) 310, Bandits (J Grant 31) 307; Divas (A Bird 26) 255, Cad Con Fillies (V Heard 25) 251; After Eights (P Bryant, E Carmichael 30) 309, Breakaways (B Thurston 29) 284; SV Lights (B Stephenson 30) 320, Rhoose Starlights (C Dally, L Fields, D Stradling 30) 289; Clickies (E Walters 36) 302, Witchill Weebies (A Reed 30) 312.

Third Division: Rhoose Ravers (J Loft 25) 244, Rugby Triers (N Williams Conglui 26) 231; Jolly Dollies (T Davies, G Lewis, M Enticott 24) 200, SV Lds (L McCavern 23) 222; Airways Angels (J Nash, K Bevan, A Crook 21) 219, Lil's Devils (D Harrhy, S Vidlar 23) 210; Westenders (J Somers, H Coombes 26) 233, Etcetera (M Grasby 28) 257; Billies (J Lambeth 31) 310, Merry Makers (A Hawkins 35) 338; Dolly mixtures (A Forest, G Burdge 21) 182, Friends & Neighbours (E Western 25) 198; Witchill Wanderers (H Scott, S Ranolos 30) 308, Persuaders (C Organ, E Organ 34) 313.

Fourth Division: Twilights (A Campbell 26) 205, Challengers (M Griffiths 28) 200; Rebels (S Oram 24) 218, Wyndham Witches (C Green 24) 215; Off The Rails (K Coombs 22) 199, Boozy Birds (S Rudeforth 22) 165; Railway Rogues (B Binding 25) 182, Fallen Angels (McInery 24) 187.

Fifth Division: Smurfs (R Emmett 27) 177, Nite Outers (K Stillman 29) 189; Hellraisers (A Bennett 22) 178, Aristocats (M Robson 27) 212.

Fifth Division secretaries please note, Park Belles no longer play.

Be Bop Boru is trainer Tim's winning baby!

ABERTHIN'S Tim Vaughan, who is the leading trainer at Fakenham, landed the opening Christmas Handicap Hurdle last Sunday with his *Be Bop Boru* which won by three and three-quarter lengths from *Changeofluck*.

Seven-year-old *Be Bop Boru*, which shared top weight of 11st 7lbs with the runner-up, was ridden by Alan Johns and was made the 6-4 favourite in a field of eight runners.

EVAN'S ACROSS THE CARD DOUBLE

Llancarfan's Evan Williams had an across the card double last week.

His *Laser Hawk*, ridden by Adam Wedge, was a 20-1 winner of the maiden hurdle race at Newbury and at Ludlow, where he is the leading trainer, his *It's A Steal*, partnered by Paul Moloney, took the novices' handicap chase.

It's A Steal, who was winning for the second time in a week, went off the 11-8 favourite.

TIM'S BOXING DAY WINNER

***Benability*, a four-year-old bay gelding by *Beneficial*, was a Boxing Day winner for Aberthin's Tim Vaughan in the Conditional Jockeys Handicap Hurdle race at Fontwell.**

Well ridden by Conor Walsh, *Benability,* a 5-1 chance, won by four and a half lengths from *Nouailhas*.

JAMES' SUCCESS AT COTTENHAM

The Vale's James Tudor won the open maiden race at the Cambridgeshire Hunt Point-To-Point Steeplechases on *Brians Well,* which went off the 3-1 favourite.

However, earlier in the day, James' mount *Harbour Court*, who was made an odds-on favourite to land the men's open race, was beaten a short head by *Brackloon High*.

Some racegoers were of the opinion that the result should have gone the other way and, but for a bad mistake by *Harbour Court* in the closing stages of the race, James would almost certainly have won.

ROSIES PEACOCK BEATEN

Wales' prolific point-to-pointer *Rosies Peacock* was beaten into second place by *Temple Grandin* in the men's open race at the Harkaway Point-To-Point at Chaddesley Corbett on Monday.

However, his rider, Welsh champion John Mathias, still had plenty to smile about as he was successful on 10-1 chance *Gale Force Lucy* in the club members' restricted race and *Shames A Bunch* in the club members' maiden event.

BRIAN LEE

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08 **RENAULT Clio 1.2 Dynamique 5-Dr (100)** In black, 50,000 miles, 2 owners **£4,995**
08 **KIA Ceed 1.6 LS 5-Dr** In met blue, 47,000 miles, alloys, a/c etc **£4,995**
57 **SEAT Altea 1.9 Diesel Reference** In met ruby red, 72,000 miles, 2 owners **£4,995**
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08 **FORD Focus 1.6 Zetec 5-Dr** In met-blue, 61,000 miles with a/c etc **£4,995**
57 **HYUNDAI i130 Style 2.0 Diesel 5-Dr** In silver, 72,000 miles, nice example **£4,995**
55 **MINI Cooper** In black (chilli pack), 17" alloys, host of extras **£4,995**
53 **BMW 330 Diesel Sport Touring Auto** In silver with grey leather, nice example at **£4,995**
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07 **FORD Focus 1.8 Zetec 5-Dr.** In ice blue, 47,000 miles with a/c **£4,395**
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57 **TOYOTA Yaris 1.3 TR 5-Dr** In black, 64,000 miles, a/c alloys **£4,295**
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57 **SEAT Ibiza 1.2 Reference 5-Dr** In met grey 53,000 miles **£3,995**
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Threadbare Barry Seconds defeated

BARRY 2nd XV travelled to St Josephs with a threadbare squad more in hope than expectation.

Coach Rhidian Scott and player-manager Ken Chow were faced with a string of late withdrawals and unavailability, with reasons ranging from overindulgence to pantomime.

With resources stretched to the limit, there was a recall for Jamie Jones who played his first game for two years, while there were also nine other changes from the side which beat Cardiff Saracens. Chow himself started on the wing for the first time since the same fixture last season.

The opening omens were not good. Barry were hoping that with their heavier pack could dominate proceedings in the tight, but the home side negated that by informing their opposition of their intention to go uncontested in the scrums from the off.

Unlike the visitors, St Josephs had no first-team fixture so also had the full squad to choose from, and their quality showed in the early proceedings.

Lacking the structure of their hosts, Barry struggled to find much rhythm and St Josephs raced into the 15-0 lead before the visitors had a chance to shine with ball in hand.

There were good carries in the tight from Nick Lundy, Jon Morris, Nick Rolfe and Lee Turnbull, while the new half-back partnership of Mepham and Dicks controlled matters behind the pack.

Having missed a long range penalty earlier, Dave Evans did get the visitors on the scoresheet with a well-struck penalty to reduce the deficit. At halftime Barry found themselves only 15-3 down.

Barry's cause was not helped when they were harshly reduced to 14 men early in the second half with the sin-binning of Jon Morris, and the hosts quickly increased their lead with another try out wide.

Despite their numerical disadvantage, Barry rallied and produced their best period of the game, with Lloyd Jones and Jon Morris making breaks from midfield, giving the platform for the visitors to lay siege on the home line.

The pressure eventually told when Dave Evans crashed through for a well-deserved try and Evans added the extras to leave the score 20-10.

Just when the visitors were dreaming of a miraculous comeback, they found themselves another man down when Dicks was sent to the bin. This time there was no repeat of the earlier heroics as St Josephs fully exploited the space out wide to score six unanswered tries in the 10 minutes of numerical advantage.

Despite tiring legs and with only half of the bench filled, Barry fought on until the final whistle. The final score did not reflect the effort of the players involved and the management would like to thank the excellent attitude shown by those who turned up for this tough fixture.

The 2nd XV return to action with a trip to St Peters on January 3, while the 3rd XV also visit Sully Sports on the same day.

Team: Bailey; Chow, J Jones, D Evans, E Evans; Dicks, Mepham; Davies, Turnbull, Corne; McTavish, Lundy; Morris, L Jones, Rolfe ©. Replacements: Thomas, Hall. Man of the match: D Evans.

KC

Father Christmas recently showed up at Holton Road football school.

The Holton Road soccer schools are growing from strength to strength!

HOLTON ROAD have been running their school since August and now have around 35 children on their books.

Through high demand, they are now teaching children from the age of four up to eight years old.

The aim as a soccer school is to promote teamwork, communication, self confidence in younger children and it stresses a non competitive environment and promotes fun above all else.

"On behalf of Holton Road AFC and all the children, we would like to thank Elephant Beds for their very generous sponsorship of our new under-8s team for next season. We also would like to thank all parents for consistently supporting us and also playing a part in the smooth running of the school," a spokesman said.

They are recruiting in January with limited availability.

OM

Barry and district men's skittles league results

DIVISION 1:

Barry Park 'B' (B.Hopkins 29) 257, Park Lads (K.Jones, S.Jones 28) 280; Blue Monkey (D.McCafferthy, D.Such 26) 248, Barry Park 'B'(N.Stephenson 31) 245; Blue Monkey (J.Stokes 29) 255, The Merrymen (J.Barnsley 27) 242; Bunker Boys (K.Jeynes 28) 277, The Merrymen (J.Gee 31) 285; Cavaliers (R.Thomas 36) 286, Park Rangers (T.Goldsby 29) 279; Colcot Boys (H.Bedoe 26) 263, Bunker Boys (A.Jeynes 32) 230; Geest (M.Gill 27) 253, 49'ers.(S.Baggott, J.McInery 30) 289; Mighty Dockers (I.Miller 16) 253, The Hairy Lemons (D.Gill 29) 271; Mighty Dockers (P.Burroughes 30) 276, Barry Park 'B' (N.Stephenson 27) 276; Park Lads (D.Morgan 26) 252, Blue Monkey (M.Underdown 27) 266; The Hairy Lemons (S.Hughes 27) 255, Ex-Servicemen (G.Dent 28) 256; The Merrymen (R.Bilton, A.Pearce, J.Gee 30) 325,Colcot Boys (R.Browne, J.Dawley 31) 305; West End Stars (D.Grigg, A.Davies, P.Amos 24) 242, Mighty Dockers (G.Collins 29) 263.

Division 2: Barry Social (H.Burrows 25) 207, BP Breakaways (J.Mills 25) 214; BP Breakaways (P.Gardner, A.Rees 29) 283, Sea View (A.Chick 27); Buffs Exiles (B.Wickham 29) 266, Barry Social (M.Burrows , P.Thomas 25) 256; Exiles (S.Doble 28) 297, Witchill Poachers (D.Adams, C.Copp, F.Matthews 26) 260; Road Runners (S.Hill, J.Norris 26) 265, Witchill Wizards (A.Butler, D.Casado 28) 237; The Royalists (G.Davies 32) 284, Abercrete (D.Selby, M.Watts 28) 286; The Royalists (G.Evans 28) 296, Willie Wombles (P.Parfit 27) 280; Tynny Fliers (P.Snook 31) 272, Tynewydd Lads (D.Germon, S.germon 30) 287; Willie Wombles (B.Gratton 30) 298, Exiles (J.Miles 30) 287; Witchill Poachers (C.Copp 32) 344, Posties (M.Churchill 35) 348; Witchill Wizards (D.Casado 33) 320, TynnyFliers (P.Snook 33) 345.

Division 3: Billy Bluebirds (H.Jones 28) 263, West End Fliers (M.Hurrley 27) 283; Billy Whizz 257, Cannan Balls 249; British Rail (J.Dakin 30) 279, KP Monkeynuts (T.Payne 30) 284; British Rail (D.Slugg 30) 276, West End Fliers (R.Rendell, M.James, R.Green 26) 266; Castle Boys (K.Eveleigh, J.Adams 26) 226, The Rejects (G. Ryan 29) 257; Commanchies '2'(W.Palmer 31) 282, Billy Bluebirds (R.Jones 28) 277; C.U.D. (G.Sheppard 27) 264, The Rejects (M.Stringer 25) 247; 'H'Bells (C.White 33) 281, Billy Whizz (M.Ingram 30) 273; KP Monkeynuts (K.Payne 28) 291, C.U.D. (V.Bryant 33) 273; The Alternatives (M.Anthony 28) 272, KPMonkeynuts (M.Williams 30) 289; The Alternatives (M.Anthony 28) 264, West End Fliers (T.Clements 32) 274; The Rejects (M.Dawe 34) 304, The Alternatives (A.Rosser, A.Harris 31) 303; West End Fliers (A.Snooks, R.Rendell 26) 248, Castle Boys (M.Bond 29) 267.

HR

COTTRELL LADIES ENJOY THEIR CHRISTMAS LUNCH

ON Thursday, December 11, the ladies of Cottrell Park celebrated Christmas.

Following a drinks reception a delicious lunch was enjoyed by all. Money tokens from the sweep each week were given out to those who had won individual competitions during the year.

Janet Cosby, the ladies' captain, gave a short speech and ended with a very funny joke. She thanked everyone who had supported her over the year as this was her last official function.

Helen Poole, her vice captain, was not able to be present so she announced on her behalf next year's vice captain, Sian Lovell.

Prizes were awarded to the 11 Medal winners and 15 Stableford winners over the year. The GUW Medal went to Helen Poole, Macmillan Spoon to Helen Evans, Dragon Brooch Jan Cosby, LGU Breakthrough Cancer Brooch Helen Poole, Golf Foundation Brooch Rusty Fone, Grandmother Trophy Andrea Caines, Pencarreg Cup Vicki Long, Llanfair Trophy Sam Edwards, Super Seventies Trophy Rusty Phone and Par Competition Jen Thomas.

The Summer Eclectic Mackintosh was won by Kay Bradbury and the Summer Eclectic Button, Helen Evans, The Birdie Tree Helen Poole and the cup of achievement was awarded to Tessa Matthews.

The afternoon was concluded with a spontaneous singing of Christmas carols around the log fire.

CB

Barrivale bridge

LATEST results from Barrivale Bridge Club for December 16:

The results shown are for the 'Individuals' competition run at the Christmas party: First, Irene Thomas, 64.67 per cent; second, Huw Thomas, 63.38; third, Jenny Vaughan, 63.29; fourth, Mark Roderick, 59.24.

New members are always welcome at Barrivale. A partner may be arranged if required.

If you would like to join us, ring 01446 418380 or 01446 733425 or call at the Pioneer Hall, Beryl Road, Barry on Tuesdays at 7pm.

There will no bridge until Tuesday, January 6.

DR

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RUTHLESS BARRY CUT DOWN LOCAL RIVALS WITH AN EMPHATIC WIN

BARRY RFC resumed their league programme after their Cup reverse with a home game against local rivals Old Penarthians.

From the first seconds of the game Barry signified their intention to run the ball with an early break by Perry resulting in a try within the first minute for Provis, duly converted by Scott.

This was to be the pattern of the game with Barry utilising pace and power to break down the visitors defence with Evans, Jones G and Perry to the fore, with the latter on hand to benefit from a clever blindside snipe by Lee to cross for the second score to give the home side a 14 point lead.

Pens were finding it difficult to create many attacking opportunities and were left with kicking for territory being their only option, a tactic which at least gave them a hold in the Barry half.

Even from this position the home side decided ball in hand was the best form of defence. From one such situation Adams created some space for himself and raced 60 yards downfield only to be thwarted just short of the line.

He recovered the ball to cross for a fine individual try which was not converted but gave Barry a 19 point cushion after 25 minutes.

In the final minutes of the first half the Pens finally were able to threaten the Barry line with a series of scrums and lineouts. They came back without any reward as a strong defensive effort managed to withstand the pressure as the half closed.

Barry set off the second period eager to gain the bonus point win for scoring four tries to maintain the pressure at the top of the table. The visitors also made their intentions known as a change of tactic saw them playing with ball in hand.

Following an incident free first 10 minutes the game sprang back to life when from a threequarter move by Barry, which appeared to break down, Scott gathered the loose ball to cross for an unconverted try.

Playing down the slope Barry began to gain supremacy up front, giving themselves ample possession, which on occasion they were prone to squander, to dominate the game.

Despite the visitors' heroic defensive efforts, they were put to the sword as tries came at regular intervals in the last 20 minutes. The strangest came from Oaten, who, when everyone else stopped awaiting the referee's whistle, carried on running to score unopposed.

Further tries were added by Perry, a brace to complete a fine hat-trick, Ryan and Evans, giving Barry a good 58-0 victory.

Barry have reached the end of this year unbeaten in the league. While that is of great credit and it would be unfair to mention individuals, the most pleasing aspect to the watching supporters is those fringe players, who, when given the chance, have stepped up to the mark and given the whole squad a more competitive edge and also caused selection problems for the coaching team.

The team can look forward to the new year with optimism, no doubt realising that there are many hurdles to be faced over the coming months.

AJ

The prizewinners at Cadoxton Schools of Tae Kwon Do's presentation evening.

Tae Kwon Do students end their year with celebration

ON Friday, December 19, the Cadoxton Schools of Tae Kwon Do celebrated an extremely successful year with its annual awards presentation and disco at the Market Street club.

The night was a great success with parents and students alike all enjoying themselves.

The first award of the night was best beginner and it went to Charlie Rogers; Charlie is definitely one for the future. The most potential trophy was awarded to Cameron Evans. Cameron was also the recipient of the club's best of grading at the last grading of 2014.

Most improved male award went to Ethan Andros who has worked hard at his basic techniques showing that he has a good future within the martial art of Tae Kwon Do.

Having come top of the 2014 Cadoxton Tae Kwon Do tournament rankings, Cody Jacobsen received a well deserved competitor of the year award.

Joel Wells was the recipient of the perseverance trophy, over the past year he has showed remarkable perseverance not only on the tournament scene but also in weekly training.

Lucia Cunningham received the achievement award for her outstanding achievement in the grand prix series of tournaments taking the grand champion in all four categories she had entered.

Two special awards are given out in memory of Charles Ames and Michael Conibear. The very popular assistant instructor Matthew Bennett was the recipient of the Michael Conibear (star student award) which was donated to the club by Michael's mother.

Jake Quigley received the Charles Ames memorial shield for his dedication to his TKD training from Charlie's partner, Alyson Thomas.

For her all-round improvement, ability and hard work over the past 12 months, the student of 2014 went to Jessica Blackley.

Pictured with there instructors are: Anita Sheppard, Matthew Bennett, Ron Thomas, Alyson Williams. Jake Quigley, Cian Allen, Lucia Cunningham, Ethan Andros, Cameron Evans, Joel Wells. Charlie Rogers, Jessie Blackley and Cody Jacobsen.

For further information on class times phone 01446 406372 or see www.cadoxtontaekwondo.weebly.com.

RT

Fifth straight loss for Dinas

THERE was to be no early Christmas present for Dinas as they slipped to their fifth consecutive defeat against Undy Athletic, 4-2, and manager Lee Saunders will be looking to strengthen the squad in the coming weeks.

After young striker King Junior Mwedzo won a corner for Dinas in the first 30 seconds, Undy broke away down the right and a square pass found Gareth Cullimore to slot the ball home with barely a minute played.

The pitch was very heavy making changing direction difficult but Dinas midfielder Keiron James had a half chance in the third minute but his shot was comfortably saved by Undy keeper Smallcombe.

Dinas began to settle after the early setback with Atif Bashir threading some good passes forward. At the other end new signing Lewis Marsh made a good recovery tackle after his initial pass went astray.

But it was the visitors who looked dangerous on the break and a throw in from the left was driven goalward by Martin Phillips, bringing a good save from Dinas keeper Alex Hales.

On the 15 minute mark Luke Swaffield got to the byeline to put in a good cross for Dinas but it was just too high for Carlos Indjai who was well placed.

Mwedzo was causing some problems for Undy with his skillful runs and he was fouled some 25 yards from goal, Nicky Bruce putting a good ball into the box and Bashir getting in a downward header which was just off target.

Dinas were guilty of not being tight enough in defence, giving their opponents far too much room and time on the ball and a through ball found Cullimore who again brought a good save from Hales.

With 25 minutes gone Mwedzo again danced his way into the box but was tripped from behind, the referee pointing straight to the penalty spot. Nicky Bruce stepped up for the second match running to slot the ball home for the equaliser.

However, despite keeping the pressure on for a minute or two Dinas lost possession and a great cross from the right wing was fired home on the 30 minute mark by Ben Davies to give Undy the lead again.

Dinas thought they had been handed a lifeline just after this when Davies was given his marching orders for a second yellow card after a clumsy tackle on Rhodri Foote who was able to continue after treatment.

Any thought of a comeback were dispelled two minutes from the interval however, when the impressive Cullimore drove into the box and hit a superb left foot shot into the top corner of the net for 3-1.

Dinas came out determined to make their man advantage tell, Bruce and Indjai combining to feed Bashir but his effort was off target from well outside the box. They thought they had pulled a goal back when a cross from Swaffield was volleyed hard and low by Indjai but Smallcombe pulled off a superb diving one handed save, pushing the ball round the post for a corner.

They kept up the pressure, Bashir pulling off a spectacular bicycle kick on target but again Smallcombe saved it to keep their two goal advantage intact.

With 20 minutes of the half gone the 10 men made the game safe when Dinas failed to clear a corner, the ball eventually coming to Paul Clayton who drove it home just inside the right hand post for 4-1.

Dinas then rang the changes with King, Indjai and Bruce being replaced by Ben Ah-Mun, James Alloway and Sam Johnson. Ah-Mun was soon in the action, winning an unproductive corner, and he followed this with a good pass to Bashir with his back to goal but he spun and got a shot away which was just the wrong side of the left post.

Dinas finally got a consolation second goal in the last minute of the game, Keiron James slotting the ball just inside the left post for a final 2-4 scoreline.

Dinas: 1 Alex Hales, 2 Luke Swaffield, 3 Nicky Bruce (1), 4 Atif Bashir, 5 James Bloxham (c), 6 Lewis Marsh, 7 James Marr, 8 Keiron James (1), 9 King Junior Mwedzo, 10 Rhodri Foote, 11 Carlos Indjai, 12 Ben Ah-Mun, 14 Sam Johnson, 15 James Alloway.

Dinas are next in action on January 3 when Risca United visit the Murch, 2pm kick off.

PK

CLUB CLOSES OUT WITH WIN

THE year finished with the third round of the Welsh Premier League and a match for the Barry Bosons in division 1.

It was only last week that Lee Davis said to me that he was feeling exhausted after playing so much chess recently. This didn't seem to be the case on Sunday when, playing on board 2, he recorded his first win in the Welsh Premier league to help us to a 4-2 victory over White Knights.

After three rounds of games this has lifted us to the lofty position of second place. I note with interest that it is on the top boards where we are struggling. So far we are unbeaten on boards 4, 5 and 6, recording five wins and four draws from nine matches. Ben Thomas and Neil Stuart are our top performers to date, both with a 100 per cent record having each played two games.

The Bosons finished the first half of the season with a resounding 4-1 victory over the Penarth Pirates. The score was made up of three wins and two draws, which leaves the Bosons handily placed in fourth position with 26 points.

It looks to be a thrilling second half of the season as just 2.5 points separate the Cardiff Castles, Barry Camelots, North Cardiff Woodpushers and Barry Bosons. Each team has also lost two games from the nine played.

Perhaps the most interesting decision will revolve around the team selections for the Bosons/Camelots match in round 12.

The Barry Chess Club meets at 7.30pm each Monday at the West End Club, St. Nicholas Road, Barry CF62 6QY. The club is open to players of all standards; whether you are interested in playing competitive chess or just the occasional friendly games.

New players are very welcome to just turn up on the night but if you contact one of the club members through the website we can explain what is happening on the night you have in mind, and arrange for someone to greet you on your arrival.

For more details visit our website at http://barrychessclub.yolasite.com.

PJ

Seaview Lads see a tight finish to their competition

THE second leg of the Seaview Lads Christmas competition was a much more productive affair than the previous week.

Although high winds and the occasional shower made fishing uncomfortable at times, the quality of fishing made it worthwhile.

Several codling were brought to the scales including a fine 8lb 3oz fish for Roy Harding.

Eels also came to the scales and a fine 12lb fish for Mickey Langford was enough to win the match, narrowly beating Kevin Gardner into second place by just three ounces!

The overall result from both competitions saw Royston named overall winner, having managed a credible third place in the first leg.

He was followed by last year's winner Paul Crook in second place. Paul pipped Steve Doble into third place by just half a point. In fourth place was Gary Mitchel, fifth Gerald Spiteri, and in sixth was Mr consistent, Micky Langford.

The presentation was followed by an impressive spread put on by the West End club. We would like to thank the management and staff at the club for their support during the year and wish everyone an enjoyable break.

We hope to see as many people on the beach on January 4 when the new season begins!

Results: 1st M Langford 12lb 3ozs; 2nd Kev Gardner 12lb - a couple of congers; 3rd Roy Harding 8ld 3ozs - a nice cod; 4th Tony Saif 7lb , two codling and an eel.

JC